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# THE LIFE *of* REALITY

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By

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL

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AUTHOR OF "A NEW PHILOSOPHY  
OF LIFE," "THE CULTURE OF  
PERSONALITY," "HUMANITY  
AT THE CROSS-ROADS," ETC.



*"Tis Life whereof our nerves are scant,  
More Life and fuller that we want!"*

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[THE LIFE of REALITY]

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To  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER  
WHO  
IN SIMPLICITY AND FAITH  
LIVED THE LIFE OF REALITY  
TILL  
THE CLOUDS BROKE  
AND THE  
SHADOWS FOREVER PASSED AWAY





*"I sought for God  
But God eluded me;  
I sought my brother  
But I found him not;  
I found my Self  
And, finding, found all three."*



## WORKS BY JOHN HERMAN RANDALL.

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## FOREWORD

N these days of great personal perplexities and gigantic World-problems, every thoughtful man and woman is earnestly bent upon the search for Reality. Out of the din of conflicting voices, out of the chaotic confusion of clashing opinions, one question emerges supreme over all: Amid all the deceptive appearances of life and in spite of all life's disillusionments, is there such a thing as Reality to which our human gropings may lead?

To multitudes of people the old, familiar thought-world in which they have grown up and which they have assumed would be their permanent home, is pass-



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ing away, and they feel themselves to be as strangers, not yet familiar with, or accustomed to, their new mental surroundings. Old creeds have lost their meaning, old beliefs have lost their power, and even old ideals seem to have lost their inspiration.

But through all the profound changes that are taking place there is the old inner urge toward truth, toward soul peace, toward a deeper satisfaction in life and with life as a whole; along with this unquenchable feeling is found the instinctive confidence that the goal must be attainable, even though we have been ushered into a new and unfamiliar world. There is a striking passage in Maeterlinck where he says, "A spiritual epoch is perhaps upon us; an epoch to which a certain number of analogies are found in history. For there are periods recorded when the soul, in obedience to





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unknown laws, seemed to rise to the very surface of humanity, whence it gave clearest evidence of its existence and its power. It would seem, at moments such as these, as though humanity were on the point of struggling from beneath the crushing burden of matter that weighs it down. . . . Truly there are centuries in which the soul lies dormant and slumbers undisturbed. But to-day it is clearly making a mighty effort. Its manifestations are everywhere, and they are strangely urgent, pressing, imperious even, as though the order had been given and no time must be lost. It must be preparing for a decisive struggle and none can foretell the issues that may be dependent on the results. . . . I will not linger on this subject, for the time has not yet come for lucid discussion of these things; but I feel that a more pressing offer of spiritual freedom has rarely been made to



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mankind. Nay, there are moments when it bears the semblance of an ultimatum; and therefore does it behoove us to neglect nothing, but indeed with all eagerness to accept this imperious invitation, that is like unto the dream that is lost forever, unless instantaneously seized."

It is out of a similar mood and because of the same convictions that this book has been written. For it is growing more and more apparent, not only that such a *real life* is possible to every man and woman, but also that the hour has struck when a life of greater reality must be found, if we are to solve the problems immediately confronting men and nations. The hopeful sign is that men and women, in increasing numbers, are so seriously and earnestly pursuing the quest for clearer light.

The immediate source of inspiration of this book is to be traced to a rather





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prolonged study, pursued for another purpose, of four of our great modern spiritual seers: Walt Whitman, Maurice Maeterlinck, Edward Carpenter and Rabindranath Tagore. They represent four different nations, America, Belgium, England and far-away India; and yet with singular unanimity they voice the same message—the reality of the spiritual life of man in union with the All-life of the Universe. And to crown it all, these men experienced in themselves this sense of unity, and not only taught, but lived the life, thereby proving the possibility of actualizing the ideal.

Behind these modern prophets, the heralds of a new day dawning, and towering above them in the simplicity and clearness of his message, stands Jesus of Nazareth, the never-ceasing source of inspiration and of life; whose words possess that universal and timeless



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quality of the Great Teacher, and whose spiritual conception of life can alone satisfy man's deepest cravings, and lead humanity out of all selfishness and hate into love and brotherhood.

If this imperfect attempt to orient man's Spirit in the new thought-world into which we have been ushered, shall bring to any reader aught of clearer vision or deeper confidence, a wider love or brighter hope—above all, a keener realization of the unity that binds us all into one great Whole, the author is more than satisfied.

J. H. R.

NEW YORK CITY,  
May 1st, 1916.



## THE ETERNAL QUEST

"The dark comes down about us, but a star  
Beckons beyond, beyond the thing we are."

*John Galen Howard.*



SINCE man began his life upon this planet he has always been a restless seeker, a daring adventurer, a persistent climber. All progress that humanity has made, along every line, has been due to man's insatiable thirst for something higher, something better, something more truly satisfying. All science, philosophy, art, literature, religion, are simply illustrative of man's ceaseless quest for reality, his search for truth, or the restless strivings of the human spirit for the satisfaction of its



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needs, spiritual or philosophical, mystical or psychical.

When the unknown ancient writer makes the hero of the Drama of Job cry out from the depths of his soul, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him," he is giving expression to more than merely a personal aspiration toward God. These words furnish a clue to the deepest and most universal meaning of man's life; more than that, they suggest the very essence of the entire evolutionary process of which everything, including ourselves, is a part. The simple yet wondrous fact is that the story of Life on this planet is the story of an eternal quest, an untiring search, a persistent forward and upward striving.

We have learned that we can never know anything truly until we come to know it in its manifold relationships. So, we can never fully understand re-





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ligion, either in the sense of grasping its truth or realizing its power, until we come to see it in its far-reaching and universal relationships. In seeking for the essence of religion we are compelled to ask the question: Must religion be regarded as something absolutely new, introduced into human nature for the first time; or is there any germinal anticipation of it discoverable also in the lower forms of life?

In answering this question, let us affirm at the very outset that the more deeply and thoroughly we investigate the true nature and significance of religion, the more clear it becomes that religion does not represent a principle absolutely new and appearing for the first time in human experience. On the contrary, the religious life is vitally related to life's universal striving, a striving toward fulfillment, completeness and perfection. The struggle of



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life itself, of life as a whole, is by no means exhausted when the adjustment of the organism to its external environment is achieved. The effort of life itself, as we shall see, is directed toward a goal that infinitely transcends any successful adjustment to merely external conditions. For, passing onward and inward and upward, it assumes in man the form of aspiration and struggle for reality or truth, or for perfection as inner harmony of being, i. e., for self-knowledge, self-consistency, self-fulfillment. In other words, Life from its very commencement has aimed to complete itself in a spiritual experience of Reality.

What, then, has so often been termed the religious faculty or instinct and treated as something *sui generis* and peculiar to man, cannot be so regarded when we gain a deeper insight into its true nature. For religion has not come



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to man from without; it has not descended upon him from above; it is not something mechanically added on to him like a new upper story superimposed upon the general structure of his animal instincts and intelligence. This conception of a special religious faculty, with which man alone has been endowed, will have to be abandoned. Neither can we longer entertain the idea that religion originated in the supernatural communication of divine knowledge to primitive man who, without such a revelation, would have forever remained in ignorance of God and the things of the higher life. These and all similar *external* views of the nature of religion must be laid aside, in the light of modern knowledge. Religious experience, then, if we would rightly understand its true function in human life, cannot and must not be dissociated from all the rest of experience. It does



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not make an absolute break in life's development but is in direct and continuous line with the general upward movement of life, from the time of its first appearance on this planet until now. In this broader sense, Religion is seen to be, not a part of life; it *is* life, in its deepest essence; it is not *an* experience in some lives only, it is *the* experience of every life, though it is often not understood as such. Hence it is literally true, as Sabatier says, that "man is incurably religious;" but it is also true that everything that lives and moves and has being is also essentially religious.

Religion, then, has not only been continuous throughout all its own evolutionary stages in human experience, but is itself in unbroken continuity with the striving of life as a whole to ascend, with what Prof. Bergson has termed the *élan vital*, or vital force, and is in-





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deed the highest fulfillment of that universal life-principle. Religion as we know it to-day in its institutions, its rituals, its theologies, or in its highest form as spiritual experience, presents itself as an advanced form of that general and universal movement toward completeness, perfection, truth, reality, which a deeper study shows to be the fundamental characteristic of all life.

When we inquire of Science, therefore, what light it is able to throw upon Life's Eternal Quest, the biologist tells us that the really characteristic feature of life, as such, is this force, this effort not merely to maintain but to complete, to fulfill, to perfect itself. Richard Jefferies, a genius in the keenness of his penetration into the deeper meanings of nature, writes thus: "It is evident that all living creatures, from zoophyte upwards—plant, reptile, bird, animal and, in his natural state, man also—strive



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with all their powers to obtain as perfect an existence as possible. It is the one great law of their being, followed from birth to death. All the efforts of the plant are put forth to obtain more light, more air, more moisture, in a word, more force, upon which to grow, to expand, to become more beautiful and perfect. The aim may not be conscious but the result is evident." Again, Prof. Bergson says, in his "Huxley Lecture," "I see in the whole evolution of life on our planet an effort of this essentially creative force to arrive, by traversing matter, at something which is only realized in man, and in man, as yet, only imperfectly." This movement or striving toward perfection which Jefferies detected as present, though perhaps unconsciously, in individual organisms, and which Bergson recognizes as the chief characteristic of the whole ascending scale of life's evo-



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lutionary process, in man becomes self-conscious, acute, imperious, expressing itself in science, in philosophy, in literature, in art, in our social and moral life, but above all, in religion as we know it, and more especially in its higher spiritual developments.

In this same "Huxley Lecture," Bergson claims that the necessary adaptation of organisms to their environment explains, after all, the arrests rather than the advance of life—that advance whereby it becomes more complex and raises itself to greater heights of efficiency. "Why," he asks, "if adaptation explains everything, has life gone on complicating itself more and more dangerously? Molluscs existing in the present time existed also in the remotest ages of the palæozoic era. Why did life go any further? Why, if there be not behind life an immense impulse to climb higher, to run ever greater risks



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in order to arrive at greater and greater efficiency?"

The modern vitalists, like Bergson, remind us that the expression, Natural Selection, cannot be taken literally. The physical environment, that is to say, does not select. We can attribute to it no plans or purposes, and therefore no choices, no preferences or aversions. From the viewpoint of science, merely, the material world must be regarded as totally indifferent as to what forms of life survive. "Environment is to life no more than the wind and tide are to the fishing smack. They determine, indeed, the tacking movements of the craft, but no one by studying them alone could possibly find out why it is the boat goes into harbor. The real guiding and selecting power is discovered only within the craft itself, in the person of the living sailor, in his desires and skill. So it is with life





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everywhere. The environment, it is true, regulates and determines; but Life alone strives, chooses, selects, adapts."

It is profoundly significant that science has of late found itself compelled, after the most strenuous attempt to interpret life by exclusive application of mechanical and chemical principles, frankly to return to the assumption of a distinct vital energy in all organisms; and it has also been obliged to attribute to it a distinct tendency, an impulse in the direction of greater complication, of greater perfection. "For the impulse or force of life is seen to be no mere blind and meaningless activity such as we witness in the tossing of ocean waves. Rather does it disclose a movement of direction, i. e., we can trace in its variations from ancestral types something more than can be explained by accident or blind chance. We can detect a distinct trend, a controlled ac-



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tivity, so to speak, totally different from anything that can be assigned to purely mechanical or chemical principles." For a detailed exposition of this modern vitalistic view of life, recourse must be had to recent writers of this school. It is sufficient for our present purpose that Science recognizes this inner striving for a more complete, perfect existence as the essential and universal characteristic of life throughout the entire evolutionary process.

If we turn to Philosophy for its witness to man's Eternal Quest, we find that the history of philosophy is only the story of man's long search for Reality. Centuries ago the profound philosophers of ancient India declared with practically one voice that the invisible world, as we perceive it through our senses, was "Maya," or illusion. Plato taught that we "were like men chained in a cave with their faces towards a wall



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and their backs towards the light; between this light and themselves, men and animals passed from time to time, throwing their shadows upon the walls; and it was these shadows only that these chained victims of illusion saw." Their only knowledge was of shadows, and so, Plato taught, was ours. And this view that the visible world is one of appearances rather than realities has been the general judgment of philosophers down to the present day.

There must be some profound truth in this belief, so generally held, however it may need to be qualified, or critically understood. We have only to reflect a moment to realize that this world in which we live and move and have our being, and which also lives and moves and has its being in us, is, to us gradually evolving mortals, a world of sense illusions, deceptive appearances and untrue inferences. Hence it has always



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been to mankind a world of ignorance and grossest superstitions. A recent writer has compared it to "a great masquerade of the powers and realities of nature, in which it was the function and purpose of man's slowly developing mind and spirit to tear off and remove the masks and disguises until, finally, the complete unmasking of the Being of the world had been accomplished and we should know things as they really and truly are."

To bear out this view, we have only to remember that man's growth in the knowledge of the external world has been proportionate to his ability to transcend or set aside his illusions gained from sense impressions merely. For example, men once imagined that the earth was as flat as a table; science proved that it was as round as an orange. They thought it was perfectly motionless; science proved that it spun





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around like a top, and swung around the sun at the rate of 67,000 miles an hour. They thought the sun was a small body, several acres in area, that circled round the great big earth; but science proved that it was a million times larger than the earth, which circled round the sun once in every year. In these and many other cases, the illusions of man's uneducated and uncritical mind and senses were dispelled by wider experience and clearer insight, which not only corrected but practically and diametrically contradicted man's sense impressions and mental inferences.

Innumerable have been the illusions which have caused untold needless suffering in the world and which are only gradually dispelled as man approaches nearer to the truth and inner reality of things. For example, the tragic belief in witches and witch-craft, which was practically universal throughout Eu-



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rope for centuries, caused the cruel death, according to carefully compiled statistics, of not less than 9,000,000, mostly old women and young girls, for a purely imaginary crime.

But the arch illusion of all tragic illusions still remains and continues to dominate man's thinking and direct his activities. To what ultimate cause are due all the sins and crimes, the manifold forms of wrong and injustice that breed the miseries and produce the sufferings of mankind? There is but one answer, viz.: human selfishness. No intelligent being can doubt to-day that selfishness is the root cause of practically every sin and misery and ugly blot in human life, and that if selfishness could be utterly and completely destroyed, as Jesus and every other great spiritual leader has hoped to destroy it, the Kingdom of heaven would indeed be realized here on earth.



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But whence does selfishness proceed, and what keeps it so vitally active and alive, the incessant breeder of wars between nations and races, of social conflicts between the inheriting and privileged rich and the disinherited and unprivileged poor, the poverty and degradation of the vast masses of mankind, the crime, drunkenness, prostitution and disease, the greed, hatred, anger and contempt, the malice, envy, jealousy and quarrelings we meet with almost everywhere? The source of human selfishness lies in that greatest of all tragic illusions, viz., the belief that we are separate, private, individual selves, and therefore have the right to live our separate, private and individual lives apart from the life of the Whole.

The earth appears to our senses to be flat and motionless and the center of the universe, but as we have pierced



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through the illusions of sense impressions we have found just the reverse to be true. So it appears to us as though we had permanent, private and separate selves or souls; but what we actually have is just the reverse of this, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter. Now the great function of philosophy from the beginning has been to dispel all illusions and find the truth, to pierce through all appearances to the inner Reality, not only of things in the external world, but of our selves in the inner world of consciousness.

A great many of the philosophers in the past have taken a pessimistic and hopeless view of man's powers and have declared, not only that we do not know, but that we never can know the true and inner nature of "things in themselves." These thinkers are, in this sense, agnostics, and their belief is in the "unknowable." But there are many





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of our modern thinkers who are taking a distinctly hopeful and optimistic attitude toward the problem of knowledge, and are declaring frankly that man may or can finally, when he has attained the full maturity and perfection of his intellectual and spiritual development, know the real and essential nature of the world in which he lives, of his own inner Self and its relation to the outer world of reality. It is thus, according to philosophy, that the disillusioning of man's mind goes gradually on, and the evolution of real knowledge slowly but surely proceeds. And so, if Science interprets man's Eternal Quest, as the striving for Perfection, which characterizes life everywhere, Philosophy interprets man's Quest as the ceaseless search for Reality.

When we turn to Religion as we see it expressed in human experience, the witness to man's Eternal Quest is self-



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evident. Wherever we look we find that "religion arises from man's feeling of need, of weakness, of incompleteness, of limitations, and a consequent impulse to surmount it by union of some kind with beings or a Being possessed of powers of life higher than his own, of whom in one way or another he has succeeded in framing to himself some conception." At the heart of every form of religion, underlying all creeds, rituals, institutions, is this fundamental craving for some sort of union with the Divine. In every religious experience there is the same immediate impulse to rise above one's own feebleness, finitude, incompleteness; in other words, to maintain, to realize and to complete oneself. The highest forms which this effort to rise beyond the limitations of our finite human life takes, are seen in the yearning of the most advanced religious souls to experience God within, to be



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one with Him, to express and reveal Him to others. Thus Religion interprets man's Eternal Quest, as a hungering and thirsting after God, an intense longing to find Him and live one's life in and with Him.

Or, if we turn to our common human experience, do we find here any witness to man's Eternal Quest? We may not be conscious of a striving for Perfection, or of any thirst for Reality, or even for a yearning after God—at least in these terms; and yet what person is there who does not know a deep and, at times, a passionate yearning for something that shall truly and permanently satisfy? Man's search is for Happiness, we say, and if we use that word in the deep, broad sense, it is true. Beneath every experience, after every triumph, in the midst of every friendship there remains a something forever unsatisfied. No one reaches middle life



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without coming to realize that the things of earth alone can never yield true happiness; that the fame and applause of the world is but "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals;" that work, even though it be the noblest, loses its zest and inspiration; that even the most loyal friendships may fail in the crucial hour; that human love, with all its joys, "is only sweetest when it leadeth to a more divine and perfect love." It is thus that man's thirst for happiness seems never to be completely satisfied. And who of us is there who has not often paused in the midst of his busy, feverish life, or turned his eyes inward at the close of some crowded day, with the thought: "Am I missing the best in life; am I only skimming life's surface, after all; am I mistaking the shadows for the reality, grasping at appearances and losing the substance?" And at such times, common to us all, the soul cries out with





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a mighty longing for the true satisfactions, the permanent happiness, the life that is *real*, "the life that *is* life indeed."

So the Scientist interprets what we have called man's Eternal Quest as the universal striving of all life for Perfection; the Philosopher, as man's search for Reality; the man of Religion, as the soul's hunger for God; and our common human experience, as man's thirst for Happiness—four different answers to the question as to what is the goal of man's Eternal Quest. And yet there are not four answers, but one. For whether you call it Perfection, or Reality, or God, or Happiness makes little difference. The meaning behind the name is the same in each instance. Whether as Scientist or Philosopher or Religionist, or just plain average man or woman, we are all bent upon the same Eternal Quest; and either consciously or unconsciously we are all



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seeking, from various viewpoints and through differing experiences, the same great Goal.

Have we any assurance that we shall ultimately reach the *Goal*, that we can find, here and now, the true secret of life and live on this earth, not alone in some distant heaven, the life of Reality? The strongest of assurances is ours—the assurance that the life of Reality has been lived on this earth, is being lived to-day by more men and women than we dream. It makes no difference whether you call them prophets or seers, or saints or mystics, or sons and daughters of God—the fact remains that men and women, actually human as we are human, limited by external conditions as we are limited, tempted in all points as we are tempted, weighed down by cares and responsibilities similar to ours, have nevertheless been able to so transcend the things of time and sense as



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to live here and now the life of Reality,  
in which they have found satisfaction  
and peace, happiness and power.

The secret of their lives, if secret it  
be, is open to all who earnestly desire  
to know. To discover, if possible, their  
secret, is the purpose of our present in-  
quiry.

"Eager ye cling to shadows, dote on dreams;  
A false self in the midst ye plant, and make  
A world around which seems  
Blind to the height beyond, deaf to the sound  
Of sweet airs breathed from far past Indra's sky;  
Dumb to the summons of the *true life* kept  
For him who puts the *false life* by.  
So grow the strifes and lusts which make earth's  
    woe;  
So grieve poor cheated hearts and flow salt tears;  
So wax the passions, envies, angers, hates;  
So years chase blood-stained years  
    With wild, red feet."



## SOURCES OF REALITY IN THE OUTER WORLD

"I am the One and I wish to be the Many."

*Krishna, in Hindu Scriptures.*



THE supreme riddle of the Universe has ever been the riddle of Reality, or the problem of God. The history of humanity is little else than one long struggle to solve this problem. There have been many noble souls and able thinkers who have failed to find the solution here in this life; though who can dare to doubt that sometime, somewhere, they will find the clearer light?

It is pathetically sad to gaze into the face of the striking statue of John Stuart Mill, that stands on the Thames





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Embankment in London, and to recall how the failure to solve the problem of God cast a shadow over the life of that sincere, candid and white-souled man. The stone lips of the profound thinker seem even now to murmur the problem which darkened his otherwise beautiful mind: "If all-powerful, then not all-good; if all-good, then not all-powerful." Lesser minds than his have given up the problem more easily, and in a profession of ignorance have found what seemed to them the only reasonable answer that man can give to this supreme riddle. Prof. Huxley has called those who thus surrender the problem, "Agnostics;" and there is a seeming humility in the name which is intensely attractive, until one comes to see what is actually involved in such an attitude. For, as Prof. Paul Carus says: "Agnosticism, which may briefly be characterized as a bankruptcy of



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thought, is not only the weakest, but also the most injurious philosophy. It is the philosophy of indolence which, on account of its own insolvency, declares that the most vital questions of man's life, the questions of the soul, the soul's relation to the body and its immortality, the existence of God, creation, and the ultimate purpose of being, are beyond the reach of reason." The position of one who thus gives up the supreme problem is dreary indeed and paralyzing to all human striving. It cauterizes the imagination, which is man's creative faculty; it ignores a multitude of self-evident principles; it freezes the main springs of human activity; moreover, it is not truly humble, for it professes the knowledge to declare that the problem is unanswerable, that God is unknowable.

But is God unknowable? There are many who have always believed that



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every man born into the world possessed, once, the "knowledge" when, "trailing clouds of glory," his immortal Self "came from God who is its home." To multitudes it is more than a philosophical speculation of Plato, more than a poetic flight of Wordsworth, more than a dogmatic statement by Paul at the Areopagus, that all men come forth from God. This has been the heart of the message of every spiritual seer, of every World-Saviour. But it seems to be part of the Eternal Plan that man should lose the intuitive knowledge of Reality, for a little time, in order that he may find it again for himself in the school of human experience.

There is a beautiful legend of the Talmud that the indentation upon the upper lip of every child born into the world is a mark of the finger of God, who touches the mouth at birth, and says, "Child, thou knowest, but thou



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shalt not be able to reveal what thou knowest till thou hast learned it by the things which thou shalt suffer in the primary school of human life." And so "Shades of the prison-house close around the growing boy;" and as he becomes engrossed in the things of the outer world and absorbed in his sense-impressions, he forgets who he really is and whence he has come. But the ability to solve the problem and find Reality once again is not so much the acquisition of a new capacity as it is the awakening of a long-slumbering memory.

There are two worlds in which man pursues his search for Reality, the outer and the inner; the world that he perceives through his five senses, and the world that he knows in his own consciousness. In the inner world man is immediately and directly conscious of Reality; in the outer world he only, in-





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directly and by reasoning processes, arrives at knowledge of Reality. This is because God is immanent in man's inner world, while He transcends man in the outer world of nature. The inner, therefore, is the true pathway to Reality as we shall see later, though for the present we shall confine our thought to the manifestation of Reality, or God, in the outer world of phenomena.

Has man's earnest and painstaking thought through all the years, has the scientific method so rigorously applied by modern science to every problem of life and the universe, resulted in blank negation merely? Must one conclude, as so many to-day would have us believe, that to be "scientific" one must cease to be "religious"? Has modern science indeed returned from its close scrutiny of the secrets of the universe to declare that there is no longer any such secret as man has dreamed, that



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there is no Reality behind appearances, and that God is proven to be merely a figment of man's imagination? That a few individual scientists might be found to make this claim is undoubtedly true, but that this position represents the general attitude of Science, or is the consensus of opinion of our leading modern scientists, is absolutely untrue; e. g., read the little book entitled "The Substance of Faith," by Sir Oliver Lodge, former President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science—the foremost Scientific Association in the world.

The fact is that fifty years ago the materialistic view of the universe was much in evidence. It was the fashion then to regard human beings as automata, composed of enormous numbers of material atoms, by whose mechanical impacts all human actions were produced, and even certain mental phe-



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nomena, in the shape of consciousness, were evolved as a sort of by-product. Since then, however, partly due to a natural reaction, partly to the advances made by Science itself, especially in psychology, partly to the influx of Eastern ideas, there has been a decided swing of the pendulum, and a disposition to regard life rather than matter as the basis of existence, and to look upon material phenomena as the outcome and expression of the mental. In other words, in the latter part of the 19th century, we looked upon creation as a process of Machinery; to-day the tendency is to look upon it as an Art. That modern science has revolutionized many of our former notions and radically altered our conceptions of God is unquestionable; but that it has denied the existence of a Reality, or disproved the fact of God, is absurd to every intelligent mind. No honest man need



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be afraid to face the truth; and if the clear and unmistakable verdict of modern scholarship was that the Universe is at last emptied of all Reality and God is relegated to the limbo of the past, then we should simply have to adjust our lives accordingly. But let us see if man has been brought to-day to such a dreary outlook upon an empty Universe, by the findings of Science.

The story is related of Dr. Schlie-  
mann, the noted explorer, that on one occasion he was greatly puzzled by some irregular holes upon the crumbling façade of an ancient temple, resembling the impressions of nails, as if some Greek characters had formerly been fastened to the stone. Finally the idea came to him of tracing between the nail marks with a piece of chalk, and behold there stood out the Greek word for God. The great temple of nature is similarly studded with suggestions





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which, like the nail holes, point the way to God. The unity, the harmony and interdependence of nature is one of these suggestions. That which John Stuart Mill called "the inherent probability of the world being ruled by a Sovereign Mind" is a suggestion. The increasing tendency of the scientific mind to put life prior to matter and to find the explanation of matter only in mind, is another profound suggestion. The recent discovery of the various forms of radio-activity, necessitating a radical change in our entire conception of matter, is a suggestion. The shadowy intuitions which have made themselves felt to some degree in every life provides a suggestion whose deeper meaning cannot be ignored. A case like that of Helen Keller requires more than a superficial explanation. Born deaf, dumb and blind, she was at length brought to Phillips Brooks for instruc-



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tion in religion. She had never seen the Bible, or heard it read, or listened to a sermon, or received, in any form from without, any teaching about God. After Bishop Brooks had talked to her, through the finger language of touch, about the goodness and love of God, she signalled back to him, "Oh! I have always known that in my thoughts, but I did not know its name." Living in her prison house, absolutely shut off from the world of sense, her spirit had yet divined from some inner source the knowledge of God. Whenever man reverently traces between these suggestive "nail-holes" of the visible universe, the lines of logical thought, and draws from the facts, as known, the legitimate inferences, he finds himself face to face with that mystery whose true name is Reality, or God.

But to be more specific, as man pursues his search for Reality in the outer



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world, what are the conclusions at which he finds that modern science has arrived; and what are some of the inferences we are justified in making from the accumulated scientific data? What does Science to-day affirm as to the nature of that Universal Energy which lies behind the endless array of life we see around us, including our own human life? The fundamental facts now known to modern physical science are briefly these: All material forms, from lowest to highest, including our own bodies, are composed of combinations of different chemical elements, such as carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, etc. Chemistry recognizes in all between 70 and 80 of these so-called elements, each having its own peculiar affinities. But the more advanced physical science finds that they are all composed of one and the same ultimate substance. It is now known certainly that



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there are not 80 different kinds of ultimate matter in the world; but rather only one kind of matter, and out of that all that exists has ultimately proceeded. To this one and only kind of matter, or ultimate substance, science has given the name of Ether. The difference between an atom of iron and an atom of oxygen, then, results only from the difference in the number of etheric particles of which each is composed and the rate of their motion within the sphere of the atom. In other words, the scientist of to-day knows that all of the 80 different kinds of atoms are composed of one kind of electrical corpuscle in combinations of from 1,000 to 200,000 or more. He is also well assured that these electrical corpuscles, of which all matter is made, are merely minute, differentiated portions of one single, continuous medium or ocean of the pristine ether, which fills all space and endures





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throughout all time. He also conceives that these electrical corpuscles are little whirlpools, vortices, or condensations of etheric and electric energy, which, as they circle and move through this omnipresent ocean of the undifferentiated ether, drag along with them, in proportion to their velocity, a certain amount of this ether; and it is this attached or bound-up ether which gives to these electrical whirlpools their mass or quantity of matter. We may therefore conclude that our entire solar system, together with every sort of material substance which it contains, is made up of nothing but this one primary substance in various degrees of condensation. For as Prof. Duncan says, "The need felt of reducing the physical universe to a condition of oneness, of finding some one thing out of whose properties or qualities might pro-



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ceed all that is, has at last been realized."

But if we stop with the mere fact of the ether as the ultimate substance of the universe, we miss the deep significance of that fact. The next step is to realize that this ether is everywhere equally diffused. This is proved by the undulatory theory of light. Light is not a separate substance, but is the effect produced on the eye by the impinging of the waves of the ether upon the retina. These waves are very minute, ranging in length from 1-39,000th of an inch at the red end of the spectrum to 1-57,000th at the violet end. So that if there were a break of 1-50,000th of an inch in the connecting ether between our eye and any source of light, we could not see light from that source for there would be nothing to continue the wave motion across the gap. Consequently, as soon as we receive light



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from any source, however distant, we know that there must be a continuous body of ether between us and it. Now Astronomy tells us that we receive light from heavenly bodies so distant that, though it travels with the incredible speed of 186,000 miles a second, it takes, in some cases, more than 2,000 years to reach us. And since such stars are in all quarters of the heavens, we are forced to conclude that the ether or primary substance must be universally present.

I quote the summary of the inferences drawn from these scientific facts in the words of Judge Troward, which seem to be fully justified: "This means that the raw material for the formation of solar systems is universally distributed throughout space; yet though we find that millions of suns stud the heavens, we also find vast interstellar spaces which show no signs of cosmic activity.



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Then something has been at work to start cosmic activity in certain areas, while passing over others in which the raw material is equally available. What is this something? At first we might be inclined to attribute the development of cosmic energy to the etheric particles themselves, but a little consideration will show us that this is mathematically impossible in a medium which is equally distributed throughout space, for all its particles are in equilibrium and so no one particle possesses *per se* a greater power of originating motion than any other. Consequently the initial movement must be started by something which, though it works on and through the particles of the primary substance, is not those particles themselves. Then comes the question: How did the universal substance get there? It cannot have made itself, for its only quality is inertia; therefore it must have come





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from some source having power to project it by some mode of action not of a material nature. Now the only mode of action not of a material nature is Thought, and therefore to Thought we must look for the origin of substance." Thus by a necessary deduction from the conclusions of physical science, we are compelled to realize the presence of some immaterial power, capable of separating off certain specific areas for the display of cosmic energy, and then building up a material universe with all its inhabitants by an orderly sequence of evolution, in which each stage lays the foundation for the development of the stage that shall follow—"in a word, we find ourselves brought face to face with a power which exhibits, on a stupendous scale, the faculties of selection and adaptation of means to ends; and this distributes energy and life in accordance with a scheme of cos-



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mic progression which we can recognize and follow. It is therefore not only Life, but also Intelligence; and Life guided by Intelligence becomes Volition."

My only objection to Judge Troward's phraseology is that it suggests a dualism which is contrary to all our best thinking to-day. Can we not formulate our thought, based upon the facts of science, in some such way as this, and thus avoid the pitfalls of dualism? Mind and Matter which we find acting and reacting on one another in the universally diffused ether, are both the expressions of the underlying Originating Being, or Primal Life Force of the Universe, or God. Then the material Ether is God's body, the Intelligence working in or on the particles of ether is God's mind, the Energy that finds expression in the cosmic activity is God's will, and, as we have seen, since



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the characteristic essence of all life is the inner striving for greater perfection, this impulse of the Life Force to bestow ever greater fulness of life and beauty, can only be described as God's love.

The process of cosmic evolution, as Herbert Spencer has pointed out, consists in the passage of an original ocean of undifferentiated, undistinguished, formless and nebulous ether or primal substance, by evolutionary steps and stages, to a form of being which consists of a multitude of phenomenal parts which are highly differentiated and distinguished from each other, and which to our superficial senses seem to be separate and absolutely individual in character. The ocean of ether, through the immanence of Originating Being, or Primal Life Force, or God, thus becomes, through the differentiating process of evolution, a highly complex Cosmos.



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We start with Primal Being, then, that to which all Science eventually leads us, whether it calls it "the Unknowable," or "Force," or "Universal Energy." But to realize your being you must have consciousness and consciousness can only come by the recognition of your relation to something else,—it may be an external fact or object or a mental image. "For if you are not conscious of something, you are conscious of nothing; and if you are conscious of nothing, then you are unconscious." So we may generalize as follows: Primal Being, or the Originating Life Force, desires to perfect itself, express itself, fulfill itself; in other words, to enjoy the reality of its own Life—not merely to vegetate. But to realize its being, it must become conscious, and to become conscious it must have other things,—objects, persons—to be conscious of. Hence the process of crea-





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tion takes place, the One becomes the many; and cosmic evolution is the method by which the God of the Universe comes to ever higher and higher stages of consciousness.

Our search for Reality in the outer world, then, reveals God as the Originating Being, the Primal Life Force of the Universe, who comes to consciousness through the Art of creation, which is itself an everlasting evolution and expression of inner meanings in outer forms. Thus to see God everywhere and in everything is not to be a pantheist, but it is to realize God's immanency. God and the Universe are not identical. God is the omnipresent Life, Law, Love, in everything and in everybody, but not the sum total of all existences.

There is a sense in which God is personal. If you understand by personality, definiteness of character, God is personal; but God's is not a human per-



sonality; His is a divine personality. His personality is not confined to the limits of individual concreteness. God is not an individual being; He is not a particular existence; He is not a concrete ego-self; in a word, He is not a creature. If He is God, He is truly God, i. e., He is that which is omnipresent, absolute, intrinsically necessary, universal, eternal, the reality of all truth and the norm of all righteousness. Since God is the condition and source of personality, it would be more accurate to regard Him as superpersonal; or, shall we say, the one Perfect Person, or Perfect Self, of which we, in an imperfectly developed state, are the approximations.

There still remains the inner world, where man comes directly face to face with Reality and stands immediately in the presence of God. But while it is true that our knowledge of Reality in



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the outer world is but indirect, nevertheless it is reassuring to man's deepest intuitions to know that the outer world does not deny the evidence of the inner, and that modern Science leads us not away from, but in the direction of that Reality of which we become most truly conscious within.

As a recent writer has most beautifully and truly expressed it: "God, then, using the familiar, traditional, religious name for the Universal Self, in reality is our Home, our great Companion, our enfolding Lover, the deepest Self within the self, the larger Self which embraces all our narrower selves. He is the all-flooding Light, within which we are rays; He is the Creative Fire, within which we are as sparks and flames. Language is all too feeble to describe the closeness and intimacy with which He enfolds and enthuses us; penetrative as light, pervasive as air; in



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subtler contact with us than is the ether to the inflow and throughflow of which the solidest material offers no bar or hindrance; more intimate in His embrace of our spirits than that wherewith the ocean gathers the drops of water within it, or the earth-crust enfolds indistinguishably the mountain-roots; Life of our life, Breath of our breath, Soul of our soul; all-shadowing, all-indwelling; the 'fulness that filleth all things.' "

Something, at which these words but feebly hint, is what God is to us in reality; but the consciousness of separateness has put Him far away, has fashioned Him as a mighty Individual in opposition to us, to be in some way won over, or else forever feared. But this superficial illusive consciousness is "of the Devil;" it creates a gulf between us and God, which never existed; and in the train of this fundamental illusion





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come all the errors, false doctrines, competitive theologies which have caused untold trouble and despair in the hearts of men.

It is Sir Oliver Lodge who says, speaking as a Scientist, "There are those who think that in the last resort the Ultimate Reality will be found to be of the nature of Spirit, Consciousness, Mind. It may be so—it probably is so—but that is a teaching of Philosophy, not at present of Science." He then summarizes his conception of God, as a modern Scientist, in these words: "All that exists, exists only by the communication of God's Infinite Being. All that has intelligence has it only by derivation from His sovereign reason; and all that acts, acts only from the impulse of His supreme activity. It is He who does all in all. It is He who, at each instant of our life, is the beating of our heart, the movement of our limbs,



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the light of our eyes, the intelligence of  
our spirit, the soul of our soul."

"For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A Presence that disturbs me with a joy  
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime  
Of something far more subtly interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and, in the mind of man,  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts  
And rolls through all things."



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"One undivided Soul of many a soul,  
Whose nature is its own divine Control,  
Where all things flow to All, as rivers to the sea."

*Anon.*



It is no disparagement either of the value or the significance of the results of man's search for Reality in the Outer World, to realize that these results do not bring the direct and immediate knowledge that man has always craved. If the visible universe, including human life, has ultimately been evolved from the primary substance, or the universally diffused Ether, we may infer that mind and matter, whose actions and re-



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actions set in motion the cosmic energy from which all proceeds, are *both* the expressions of an underlying Unity, Primal Being, the Absolute, or God. By the sheer necessities of thought we are forced to this conclusion, as a self-existent Universe without Originating Mind is unthinkable; and yet we all realize that this knowledge is obtained indirectly; it is the result of reasoning processes, inference, analogy, deduction; it does not, and in the nature of things, it never can yield that immediate and first-hand knowledge which man has always insisted was his inalienable right.

The simple fact is that there is no direct pathway to God through the intellect solely; the existence of God never has and never can be proved by purely intellectual processes, as one would demonstrate a problem in mathematics. If we are limited in our search for Truth





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to the outer world only, our knowledge, great and wonderful and suggestive as it is, must forever fall short of reality. All who have sought Reality with the Scientist in the external world merely, or with the Hedonist in the world of sense merely, or with the Philosopher in the world of pure ideas merely, or with the Historian in the past merely, have been doomed to disappointment.

All who have ever actually found Reality, since the world began, have found it in the same way, viz.: *by looking within*. All who have ever come to truly know God, whatever form their religion may have taken, have always found Him in the same place, viz.: *within*. The inner door alone swings open to Reality; and religious certainty has always and ever been found only within; not in church or book or creed, but in the whisper of the still, small voice. "It is the Inner Witness, my



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son," said Samuel Wesley to John, "the Inner Witness." Only after all outward search is abandoned and one turns to the world within, will man find what he seeks and what every soul when it awakens will desire above everything else. For all knowledge and discovery of Reality is, in the last analysis, Self-discovery and Self-knowledge. The consciousness of God can only be attained through true Self-consciousness. The pathway to Reality is the pathway of the inner life.

Why this should be so becomes self-evident when we recall the conclusions to which our search in the outer world has forced us. They may be stated in this way: 1. There is but one Substance, Being, Life Force; and that Substance, Being, Life Force, is Reality or God. 2. All phenomena of every kind, since all that is has come forth from Being or Substance, are manifes-



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tations, differentiations, expressions of God. 3. Of these manifestations, humanity is the highest yet attained in the evolutionary process. 4. The most highly developed men and women, then, are the fullest, clearest manifestations of God of which we know anything, at least, on this planet. Or, as the old expression of divine immanency puts it: God sleeping in the stone, awakening in the plant, coming to consciousness in the animal, coming to self-consciousness in the human, coming to fullest self-consciousness in the great souls, the Seers and Saviours of the race. Once these propositions are admitted, it becomes clear that the truest way to arrive at the knowledge of God is through the study of man; that if man is ever to arrive at Reality, it must be through the discovery of the Self, which is the highest manifestation of Reality. The problem of God, then, becomes actually



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the problem of Man; the quest for Reality becomes man's search for his true Self.

What is Man? What do we know today about ourselves? From earliest times man's being has been divided into body, soul and spirit. Occult thinkers have made further subdivisions, but for our purpose the more familiar analysis is sufficient. The Body is the complex physical organism which we all possess, which we have learned to use and which, to a greater or less degree, we know how to control. The Soul is the rational part of man's being; it has come into existence as the result of our physical environment which we perceive through our senses; it involves the purely intellectual processes; it is absolutely necessary to our life so long as we are in the body, but is not to be confused with mind in its deeper, universal and intuitive aspects. The Spirit is the





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permanent, unchanging, divine part of man's being; it is the seat of the true Self and of intuitive mind. Spirit is the seat of our God-consciousness. Soul is the seat of our self-consciousness. Body is the seat of our sense-consciousness.

What do we know about the human Body? It appears to us as if the matter which composes our bodies were stationary and fixed, as if it came into our bodily form and remained there permanently in that form, throughout our earthly life. As a matter of fact we know, however, that the matter which composes our bodies comes and goes again with the nature and rapidity of an ever-rushing, flowing stream, and that the human body is just like a stream, a cataract, a gas jet.

In all these cases the form remains the same, but the matter composing the form is continually changing. There is nothing individual or identically the



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same about the stream, the waterfall or the gas flame, except its mere form and the likeness of the matter composing it. So there is nothing identically the same about a man's body except its mere shape and the similarity of the substances composing it.

Chemically considered, life is nothing but a process of combustion, and scientists can compare it to nothing else so perfectly as to a flame. Thus Prof. Haeckel says that "of all the phenomena of inorganic nature with which the life process may be compared, none is so much like it, externally and internally, as a flame." So that the familiar phrases "the flame of life" or "the spark of life," have a literal as well as a poetic meaning. The life of the body means the movement, the streaming and never ending circulation of the atoms of living matter into the body and round and round through it, and then out of



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it again, when inert, exhausted and biologically dead. "The body is like a human furnace," says Steele's Chemistry, "in which fuel is burned, and the chemical action is precisely like that in any other stove."

When there is plenty of food in our human furnaces, the oxygen, that great agent of all combustion, burns that food; when the fuel is low, it combines with the fatty tissues first, then with the muscles, and last with the brain. The body has simply burned up as a candle burns out. The rapidity of this change in our bodies is remarkable. Abstaining from food and water for only a few hours will reveal a surprising change in weight. This activity of oxygen, so destructive and wasting us away constantly from birth to death, is yet essential to our very existence. Here is the great paradox of life: we live only as we die. And the faster we die,—the



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faster the food of life is poured into our human furnaces and is burned up and passes on and out of our bodies into other forms of existence—the faster and the more do we live. So birth and death are not events that take place once in a life time. They are constant and ceaseless processes always going on. Our bodies are being born every moment, as new matter takes its place in the cells and tissues of the organism; our bodies are dying constantly, as the used up matter passes out of the body. No act can be performed except by the wearing away of muscle; no thought can be evolved except at the expense to the brain; no feeling can be experienced except at the cost to tissue and blood.

In this respect our bodies are but parts of a grand system, for as Steele points out, "All nature is a torrent of ceaseless change, and the elements that go to compose our bodies are not our





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own. They have been used over and over again an infinite number of times before, and will be used in other bodies an infinite number of times again. We only need to reflect upon the food we eat, to realize that the self-same particles of matter that now constitute our bodies, constituted but a short time since the matter in the bodies of cow or sheep or pig or fowl or fish or vegetable or grain or fruit. From us they will pass on their ceaseless round to develop new forms of the universal cosmic life. The living cells stream through the human body, into it, round about it and then out of it again, just as the atoms of gas flow into and out of the gas flame; the outer forms remaining the same, but the inner particles changing constantly."

Thus man, so far as his body is concerned, is absolutely one with all nature. The substance of all bodies



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streams through his body, and his physical substance, in turn, drifts through all other bodies. Man's body has no self, no real identity, no permanency. It is a stream of constantly flowing matter; and its seeming identity is due only to its outward form, not to its actual substance, which is ever changing.

What do we know about the human Soul, or the rational part of man's being? Here again, we find that our sensations, feelings, impulses, thoughts, resolves and purposes, flow through us like the torrent of a mountain stream; and so true is this fact that it has become an accepted commonplace among psychologists to refer to the mental life as "the stream of consciousness." Our ordinary mental life proceeds from consciousness, but consciousness is not a fixed and static thing; it is this ever flowing, ever changing stream, in which a thousand different feelings, thoughts,



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purposes are blended, or more or less closely linked together. You have only to turn your thoughts inward and reflect for a few minutes on what is taking place in your consciousness, to realize how literally your mental life is an ever-flowing stream of sensations, feelings, thoughts, etc. In moments of genuine concentration we seize as it were upon consciousness and, excluding all other things, center our thought upon some one thing for a brief time; but such moments are rare for most of us.

The majority of people confuse their real Self with their soul, or ordinary mental life. But the fact is that this mental life or stream of consciousness has no real self, no true identity, no actual permanence, any more than has the body. The seat of the Self is not in the body nor is it in the soul—this ever changing stream of consciousness. If the ordinary stream of consciousness



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were to be identified with the Self, then we should have many selves instead of one; for the "self" that emerges from this stream of consciousness is different at different times. It is now a strong self and again a weak self; now brave and then cowardly; now hopeful and trustful, again despairing and distrustful; now kind and sympathetic, again critical and cold; now active and alert, again passive and indolent; now immune against temptation, again susceptible to temptation's lowest forms. The truth is that there is something of both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in most of us; and which self we are, at any particular moment, depends upon the thoughts, feelings, desires that happen to be uppermost in the stream of consciousness at just that time. When we reflect, we realize that these changing and contradictory selves cannot all be the true Self; and yet for most of us





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this kaleidoscopic self is the only self we know; hence the lack of inner unity and the constant restlessness of soul.

Just as man has no permanent or identical body, so he has no permanent or identical reasoning mind or "self." Our minds and our "selves," in this sense, like our bodies, are born anew every moment of our lives; and are also dying constantly, giving place to new minds and new "selves" as the stream of consciousness flows on.

But something is permanent in us, this we all know. There must be a real Self behind all these kaleidoscopic "selves" that does possess identity, so that one can say, "I remember; ten or twenty years ago I was in such a place and I had such an experience." There is a real Self that takes these separate, disjointed, fragmentary experiences out of life as a whole, and binds them together in a unity, as you weld the sepa-



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rate links into one chain, so that one can say, "These constitute *my experience*." Whether we are fully conscious of it or not, there is in every one this deeper Self that alone gives identity, permanence, continuity, coherence and meaning to our lives. It is the Self, whose mind takes this stream of flowing matter and organizes it into a complex and highly specialized body, all of whose parts are finely and harmoniously articulated, and holds these changing atoms together in one outward form for three-score years and ten, repairing the waste, renewing even worn out organs and constantly bringing harmony out of discordant physical conditions. It is this Self that gleans from all the scattered experiences of the surface selves, all the elements of permanent value and weaves them into one beautiful and coherent whole. It is the Spirit in man, then, that constitutes the true Self.



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What do we know about the human Spirit, or man's real Self? In our various states of mind we are more or less aware of an "I" who is conscious. You are now aware, for instance, that you are reflecting on this subject. But who is this "I" in you who is observing the stream of consciousness like a spectator on the bank of a river? Who is this in the background of my idea of Self? Psychology tells us it is the Self as Knower—the Thinker—while the stream of consciousness at any given moment is the self as known. The Self as Knower—the Spirit—is one and unchangeable. It is that by which we are conscious. It is the subject, not the object of thought; and it is this Self or Spirit in man which is identical with Being, or Reality, or God. It is as truly one and inseparable with God, as the sunbeam is one with the sun. "The sunbeam has no light of its own, but par-



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takes of the life and nature of the Sun. So does the Spirit partake of the life of God, and whatever may be said of God may be said of the Spirit in man, which is God in us. It is unborn, it does not die, it does not sin. As Elmer T. Gates, the psychologist, says:

“The individual self is part of the Total Self; you trace your pedigree back to the beginningless Totality—the All. You have the Universehood in you; whatever God is, *that thou art also.*”

“Never the spirit was born, the spirit shall cease to be never,  
Never was time it was not, end and beginning are dreams;  
For birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever,  
Death hath not touched it at all, dead tho’ the house of it seemeth.”

The Spirit then, is the essential reality in man, and is not only from God, as all things must be from God, but is





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absolutely one with Him. That this is the clear and unmistakable conclusion to which modern philosophy has come, the following quotations will prove. Prof. Carpenter says, "The long passion of our humanity is borne in all its multitudinous variety by God." "God's life is simply all life," says Prof. Royce of Harvard. "It is just this thought of the suffering God who is just our own true Self, who actually and in our flesh bears the sins of the world and whose natural body is pierced by the capricious wounds which hateful fools inflict upon Him. God is not," he says, "in his ultimate essence another being than yourself. He is the absolute Being. You are truly one with God and part of His life. He is the very soul of your soul." Fichte, the great German philosopher, has said, "An insight into the absolute unity of the Human existence with the Divine is certainly the profoundest



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knowledge that man can attain. When he realizes that the Divine Life and Energy actually lives in him, then, whatever comes to pass around him, nothing will appear strange or unaccountable. He knows that he is in God's world and that nothing can be that does not directly tend to good. His whole outward existence flows forth softly and gently from his inner being, and issues out into Reality without difficulty or hindrance." Prof. Bergson says, "There is in each of us a particle of Life force which is above intellect as much as it is above our physical powers. This Life force which we find in every living thing must have come from a source—you may call it God." Prof. Eucken says, "The union of the Divine and Human Natures is the fundamental truth. . . . Man becomes immediately conscious of the infinite and eternal, of that within him that transcends the world. Relig-



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ion is not merely belief in some supreme Power—it is an inner identification with it. The problem is this: Does man in the wholeness of his being experience an impulse to acknowledge a divine element within him; and if so, can he identify himself with it and rise to its lofty height?"

When we turn to Religion we find that the message of every great World-Teacher has been, in its central note, the same. Jesus sums it all up in his brief but comprehensive affirmation: "The Kingdom of God is within you;" and then makes all his work and teaching revolve around that truth. Beginning with those profound thinkers in Ancient India, and coming down through Plato, again in the 4th Gospel and Paul's later writings in the New Testament, we may summarize the results of man's religious experience briefly as follows: The origin of all things is the Ab-



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solute, or God. All that is has come into existence through the self-expression or self-utterance of God. Plato first, and the author of the 4th Gospel later, calls this utterance of God, the Logos, or "the Word"; Paul calls it "the Christ," not another God, but the self-expression of the one God. But "the Christ" has been worshipped for thousands of years before the Annus Domini under many different names. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God." In other language, God has always from the beginning been the revealer, the self-expresser; and His self-utterance has always been the Logos, the Word, or as we call it in this western world, "the Christ." The Word or "the Christ," is "the light that lighteth every man coming into the world." The divine that we see in its fulness in Jesus of Nazareth dwells actually in every individual. It is the real light of his





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life, though for the most part man has comprehended it not, but preferred the darkness of ignorance as to who he really was. The visible universe is, then, the Logos, the Word, or God, expressing Himself in matter. The Bibles of the race are God expressing Himself in letter. Humanity is God expressing Himself in flesh; and the deepest, the inmost, the Spirit in man, is therefore the Logos, the Word, the Christ of God, the self-utterance of God, the indwelling Spirit of God. Thus we see Paul's meaning when he spoke of "the mystery hid from the foundation of the world, *Christ in you* the hope of glory."

It is clear, then, that our most modern science and philosophy is practically at one with the deepest spiritual teachings of all religions, as to the relation between God and man. "It is the Universal Being, the Cosmic mind, which alone is permanent, which alone



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is identical, which alone constitutes an immortal Self. It passes and repasses like an electric stream of energy; and through the perfect, unbroken and indivisible unity of its own cosmic Body and Spirit, it binds and holds all its transitory and ephemeral forms into a perfect cosmic and organic oneness." Our minds are its mind, as our bodies are its body. Our memories too, are in reality, its memories. In the partial and personal meaning of the word, the "I" of to-day is a distinctly different "I" from the "I" of yesterday; but in the integral or cosmic sense, the "I" of to-day is the selfsame and continuous "I" as the "I" of yesterday. We retain our human individuality only through the universal and divine individuality of God.

The "Know thyself" of the old Oracle has become a catch phrase to-day, but its real significance is lost for most men.



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Self-Knowledge to the old philosophers implied, not a cursory knowledge of our mental states or our personal traits; but it meant the perception of the true Self and the recognition of the identity of the Spirit or Self in man with the Reality of God, rather than with the phenomenal world. If, standing on the bank of a stream, you should imagine yourself to be moving onward with the current, now tossed in air, now drawn under the waters, your condition would illustrate the usual state of mind for most people. For just so we observe the passing stream of the phenomenal, and identify ourselves with it, oblivious of the fact that the true Self, the real man, the Knower, is himself unmoved, unchanged, the actual Observer of the stream.

The supreme problem then for every life is the bringing that real being to the front; in other words, the realization of



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the true Self, the bringing of the Spiritual Self into consciousness, the living of one's life from that real Self as a center.

"Again that Voice, that on my listening ears  
Falls like star-music filtering through the spheres:  
Know this, O Man, sole root of sin in thee  
Is not to know thine own divinity!"





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"Thou Great Eternal Infinite. Thou Great Un-  
bounded Whole;

Thy Body is the Universe, Thy Spirit is the Soul;  
If Thou dost fill Immensity—if Thou art all in All—  
Then I'm in Thee and Thou in me, or I'm not here  
at all."

*Aton.*



**M**ORE than twenty-five cen-  
turies ago the Greek philoso-  
pher, Pythagoras, uttered  
the great truth that "man is  
a microcosm of God." In other words,  
what the universe is in the large, man  
is in the small. "Man is an epitome of  
the universe; he is a God in embryo."  
Long before the Hebrew patriarch,  
Abraham, led his flocks and herds into  
the land of Canaan, the leaders of  
thought in Egypt expressed the same  
profound truth when they said, "He is



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I and I am He." This has been the deepest thought about man from earliest times down to the present day.

No truly great teacher of humanity has ever belittled man, or spent his time emphasizing man's weaknesses or defects. No truly wise man has ever dwelt, in his thought or teachings, on man's sin or helplessness or depravity. The world's great Saviours have always discerned the dignity of human nature and pointed out man's glorious possibilities. It has been the followers of the world's true teachers and Saviours who have persistently belittled human nature and degraded man.

The greatness of man was the supreme thought of Jesus, the constant theme of his teaching and the never-failing inspiration of his labors of love. This is why Emerson could write of Jesus: "Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man



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was true to what is in me and you. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of the world." When we remember the limited place in nature accorded to man by the theologies of the past, it is not strange that the world should have gathered imperfect ideas of Jesus's conception of man.

Most people throughout Christendom have supposed that Jesus looked upon man as weak and dependent rather than as a being of strength and power. It was because Jesus was the master of himself, his own forces and powers, that he was able to see the latent and slumbering greatness in all men. And men have professed to see in him a revelation of the Divine nature, while they have utterly failed to see that he is just as truly a revelation of Human nature.

When men put to him the fundamental question: "Where is the Kingdom



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of God," which is only another way of asking, "Where can I find God," Jesus left no room for doubt. He spake for all time and to all men, when he answered, "The Kingdom of God is within you." And yet, strangely enough, the world has failed to hear these words from the pulpits of the past. They contain the key-note of his Gospel; still, after 19 centuries of Christianity, how few there are who have as yet caught their deep meaning! We have heard far more about original sin and total depravity, predestination and the necessity for baptism, and other dogmas equally destructive to man's true progress, than we have about the God who dwells in every man.

Theology has never had much to say about this sublime utterance of the gentle Nazarene; perhaps, because it saw the logical result that would follow from emphasizing this truth. If the King-





dom of God is within man, where is the ground for the declaration that man is wholly depraved? If this is true, how comes it that many men are born for eternal damnation? If Jesus was right, where is the foundation for that radical separation of God and man, which has been the major premise of all the orthodox theologies of the past, and has given form to practically every dogma of the creeds?

But what did Jesus mean by this wondrous message? He did not use this language in any narrow or restricted sense. He meant that "the same order, the same laws, the same intelligence, the same justice, the same powers, the same attributes, the same love, that exist in God and pervade the universe, also exist in man, awaiting only man's recognition of them. He knew that all these attributes and qualities in man had not reached a perfected state; but he also



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knew they were there, either as partially developed or as potential powers; and that their unfoldment and development depended on man himself." Differ as men might, it could only be in degree and not in kind; for every power and attribute in God, there is a corresponding power and attribute in man. More than that, when Jesus said "the Kingdom of God is within you," and when he taught men to call God, "Father," he also meant that the same Infinite and Eternal Spirit that constitutes the Being of God, actually exists in man and constitutes his true and essential Selfhood.

If this were not true, how could man conceive of God or comprehend in any sense the principles and qualities of the Divine Mind? Or, how could he come into harmony and communion with God? How could he grow into the likeness of God? Jesus could not and



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would not have appealed to the divine in man, if the divine had not been already there; otherwise his precepts and teachings would have been meaningless and vain, for only the divine can respond to the divine. When Jesus bids man forget injuries and forgive those who have wronged him, when he tells him that he can rise above selfishness and love all men, even his enemies, and when he makes for man that sublime prediction "Ye shall be perfect, even as your Father is perfect," it is the divine in Jesus appealing to the divine in every man. Above all, and yet in sympathy with all great teachers, Jesus revealed to man the greatness of his real Self, and the divineness of his true Spirit.

The remarkable thing is that this great spiritual teaching of Jesus, unlike the creeds of Christendom, brings us not into opposition with modern scien-



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tific and philosophic thought, but rather into closest harmony with it. While the old creeds are crumbling and their authority is everywhere being weakened, because they no longer express the truth as thoughtful minds to-day have come to perceive it, the profoundly significant thing is that the clear, simple statements of Jesus are in such exact accord with the conclusions of modern thought as to God and man which we have traced thus far. For as Prof. William James concludes, "Through these countless human beings or selves, as through so many diversified channels of expression, the eternal Spirit of the Universe affirms and realizes its own infinite life."

Surely then, it is worth our while to delve still more deeply into the secrets of the nature of the Self, realizing, as we must from our search for truth thus far, that the nearer we draw to the true inner Self, the nearer do we come to the





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Great Reality, the God who dwells within.

Let us, then, perform a simple act of introspection, for although the process of introspection, especially when it leads to the very roots of being, is not easy, still we need to remember that the Self is nearer and more penetrable than any other object of knowledge. Let us suppose ourselves viewing mentally any immediate feeling of which we may chance to be conscious. It may be some physical pain like the tooth-ache, or some taste of sweetness, or a flash of light, or some emotion, like love or fear, hope or despondency. In every such act of reflection, it is clearly evident that the immediate feeling, whatever it may be, is not only an experience, it is also *experienc-ed*; it is not merely a feeling, but it is a feeling that is also *felt*. In other words, it is owned or possessed by something or some one. Now the owner



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is not another feeling, as some have contended, for then that other feeling would in its turn need an owner, or some one who feels it. Hence we must conclude that there is the "I" that feels, and this "I," this "ego," this "owner," who is the Self, can be distinguished, though not separated from its various states and processes. This ego or Self, as we have seen, is the subject of all feelings, thoughts and acts; while the feelings, thoughts and acts are the objects. We cannot conceive any feeling as separate and apart from some one who feels, any more than we can conceive the ego apart from feeling. They are like two ends of a stick; we can distinguish them but cannot separate them. The ego, according to Fichte, is the condition of all consciousness; it is the affirmation of self-identity. "When any one speaks of himself as an 'I,' he affirms himself, that he is at the same



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time subject and object. In this absolute identity of subject and object consists the very nature of the ego. This duality in unity is of the very essence of the ego. Beyond this fact we cannot go." This simple act of introspection, then, discloses the presence in experience of the ego or Self as the subject and owner of its various states and activities; it therefore transcends them and is not to be confounded with them. No one has set forth more clearly than Prof. James the endless difficulties and confusion into which those who deny the reality of the transcendental ego, must inevitably fall.

But this duality in unity which we find to be the essence of the Self in us, has also been regarded by the profoundest thinkers as constituting the essential nature of Reality or God. Only in this way have they been able to explain the harmony and ultimate unity



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of those apparent opposites: Mind and Matter, Extension and Thought, etc. These are discerned to be not sundered realities, but correlatives that find their necessary unity and reconciliation in the Absolute Ego. Just as subject and object mark the extreme opposite poles in the experience of the human ego, so mind and matter mark the opposite poles in the experience of the Absolute Ego, or God; they disclose the supreme form of that essential self-determining activity which we find characterizes all experience. The ego in man, or his true Self is, then, literally the microcosm of God in its most fundamental aspect.

It follows, therefore, that the ego or Self constitutes the unchanging aspect of consciousness. The stream of consciousness flows through us, and on this stream, feelings, impulses, desires, thoughts, purposes, emerge into view, as





it were, for a brief space of time, and then fade away and disappear in one unending movement. But if one's inner experience is thus one never-ending, kaleidoscopic series of changes, still, amid all the changes, one recognizes an identical Self that remains the same, one with itself. So that when we say "I myself," we do not mean any single feeling, nor any series of psychical facts or events; we mean a universal, active, cognitive principle, present as subject-owner in all its changing states and activities, but never existing in abstraction or isolation. No immediate feeling without a subject, and that subject unchanging and identically the same; no subject without immediate feeling; such is the nature of all experience.

Another significant fact, revealing the nature of the Self, is the fact of memory. What do we really mean when we say we can remember our past?



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The past is over and gone forever so far, that is, as the time-flow is concerned. And if some feature in the present content of our consciousness does stand for the past, how do we know that it does so? The fact is that any attempt to explain memory, if the permanent ego be ignored, is futile. Strictly speaking, what is past in relation to the time-stream exists no more, and therefore cannot in a literal sense be re-called, reproduced or re-collected. The past, in truth, never can be only or absolutely past; it must be taken in a very real sense, to exist still.

The past that I remember is, somehow and in some sense, real still, quite as real as what is happening now. Though no longer present in the time-flow it still exists in my Self, it is my experience still, qualifies me still, I own it still, though in a non-temporal sense. The Self, the transcendental ego, then,



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that possesses the past still, through the power we call memory, is not a mere flux of temporal experience but must be an eternal identity that manifests itself in time. With all philosophers we must regard Time—not as real, but only as the form under which our consciousness manifests itself. Time is within us, we are not in time. Our ego is non-temporal. So we do not move or flow. We do not travel through life leaving our past behind us, as we leave the different stations, when we journey by rail. All we experience is ever within us. What I remember is in me still. It happened in time; but what happened to me in time, and time itself, are both alike in me. Since my ego thus transcends time it is evident that in this respect also it partakes of the very nature of the Absolute Self, or God.

Still another insight into the nature of the Self is gained when we reflect



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upon the deeper meaning of experience. The daily experiences of life which we commonly think of as coming to us from outside are, as a matter of fact, the revealing of what is within. Nothing new can ever be added on to you from outside, nor is any experience of yours absolutely new, something that in no sense existed before you had it. It was implicit in you from the first, in the sense that it was among the possibilities of your nature; and what in you was thus implicit becomes, in the course of your life-history, explicit in all the details of your varied experiences.

When you look at the blue sky, for example, the reality beyond you seems to come to you from without. And yet we know that the sensation of blue is only an appearance of yourself; it is evolved from within you and remains within you and is indeed yourself appearing in this particular manner. The





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appeal comes to you from without, but the sensation itself arises from within. An artist, a woodsman and a naturalist approach a wood, but the same wood awakens different sensations in the three men. One sees the massing of foliage, and the play of the light and shadows among the tree trunks, and is eager for his canvas and brushes; one sees the size and quality of the timber and estimates the number of feet of lumber in the wood; while the third sees the kind of trees, and the bird and animal life they shelter. In one, it is the artistic, in another, the commercial, and in the third, the scientific interest, that is awakened. The same wood, and yet the different experiences determined by what each man brings to the experience. The same is true of all forms of experience. We cannot resist the conclusion that the *qualities* of things, the bitter, the sweet, the rough, the smooth, the



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lovable, the hateful, the good, the bad, are given already in the mind, though elicited by the outward phenomena. Your sensations, of whatever kind, thus reveal you so far as they go; they reveal your nature, i. e., they reveal a certain capacity in you for these special responses, under these special conditions. Every experience of life, while it may be suggested from without, nevertheless takes its particular form because of what is within, i. e., because of what the individual Self brings to the outer stimulus.

Browning in his "Abt Vogler" has described the magic of the musician, how "out of three sounds he frames not a fourth sound, but a star." The first three notes are mere sounds, noises; but with the fourth, the phrase, the melody, the meaning suddenly descends upon us from within; an answer comes from the background of our minds which



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transforms mere noise into music. Browning suggests that this magic is exceptional, but it is universal. All life is made of it. "Always these knockings going on at the outer door of ourselves, and always something from within descending to answer—and ever new and newer answers as the years go on." But the form of the answer depends upon that Something within that meets and gives form to the outer appeal, in whatever way it may come.

Thus we are forced to conclude that the form our experience takes is due to an unfolding of what is implicit within, rather than a coming to us of something foreign from without. This means that the ego or Self is not an abstract but a concrete unity, the One *in* the many, a Self with a nature, that is constantly manifesting itself in all the rich and varied details of its experience. Thus, from another viewpoint, we find the true



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Self in man partaking of the essential nature of God, for the profoundest thinkers are agreed that the universe is the manifestation, the progressive revelation of the Ultimate Reality.

Hence there follows the uniqueness of each Self. We can conceive of two Selves going through exactly the same experiences looked at from without, and yet we know that the same experiences would never mean just the same to these different Selves. I can not only say, "I am I, and no one else," but I can also say, "I am I and *like* no one else." Each Self, then, may with truth be said to be a centre of unique interest. We are like spectators in a theatre. Each of us views the same universe; but each gazes on the wonderful spectacle from his own particular seat in the theatre; so to speak; and therefore each sees it from his own unique point of view and, consequently, to none of us does it ap-





pear exactly the same as it does to the rest.

But as we probe still deeper the mystery of the Self, while we admit that, on the surface, finite selves do appear to stand to each other in this relation of mutual exclusiveness, we find that the experience of every Self is included in a larger experience, that each Self is a part of a Greater Self. For we have seen that each finite Self is a form under which Reality, or God, finds expression; then each Self is not only unique in itself, but is also on this very account a unique appearance in a finite centre of the Eternal Spirit. Thus we are forced to admit that, in their deepest essence, all beings are One Being, and there are no such things as private, separate, exclusive, individual beings, save in our false or illusory thinking.

The monistic tendency in both Science and Philosophy points unmis-



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takably toward the Oneness of the All. The ancients attempted to express this idea of Oneness by a symbol—a circle with a central point, with rays emanating from the central point and reaching to the circumference. The circle represents the universal Oneness,—the central point representing the Supreme Intelligence, Power, Presence, God—surrounded by His manifestations. The symbol is inadequate, for a pictured circle has dimensions—there is something outside of it—whereas the circle of God's universal manifestations has no such limitations, and there *is no outside*. All is included and nothing left out. There is no place, person or thing not in touch with the Center, i. e., not in communication with God. God's Love, Presence, Power, Spirit, reach all, and all are still a part of Him, just as the rays of the sun spread in all directions, but are still parts of the sun.



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"All is One. The most beautiful thing—the most loathsome object; the life-giving draught from the crystal spring—the most deadly poison; the majestic mountain—the destroying volcano; the spiritual man—the bloated drunkard in the gutter; the man teaching and living the highest Truth—the murderer awaiting the gallows; the noblest type of womanhood—the painted creature of the street; all are included in the circle of the One." We must include the lowest as well as the highest. None is left out—none can be left out. They are one with us—the higher and the lower. And the higher know and do not shrink from the relationship. No man who sees the Truth ever hesitates to acknowledge it. All is One and the One is in All.

Thus we come to realize that the idea of any real separation is but an illusion—a dream of man's undeveloped con-



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sciousness. As man develops his spiritual consciousness he sees the folly of the idea of separateness, exclusion, condemnation,—of any real difference between parts of the Whole. He sees, to be sure, degrees of evolution, stages of growth, planes of development, but, in the last analysis, no essential difference. He sees that God alone is perfect—that all the rest is but relative. As one approaches the Center, he rises in the scale. And the farther away from the Center one is, the lower in the relative scale does one appear. But higher or lower, better or worse, it is a part of the whole—begotten by God.

To one who has attained this sense of Oneness, the world is widened immeasurably; in fact, to such an one, the universe is the only world and all that it contains seems akin to himself. All men are his brothers, all places his home, all truth his possession, all pleasures his





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own, all life his life. He knows himself as vitally related to everything—man, beast, plant, mineral—all parts of the One. All in One, and yet the variety of manifestation and expression is infinite. Each is a part of the Whole, and yet the Whole expresses itself differently in each. The separate experiences of the parts go to make up the combined experience of the Whole.

You watch, one day, the immigrants landing on our shores. To you they are “foreigners”; their swarthy complexions, strange speech and fantastic garb make them appear as aliens to you; but, to quote Prof. James, “ ’Tis you who are dead, stone-dead and blind and senseless in your way of looking at them. You open your eyes upon a scene of which you miss the whole significance. Each of these grotesque or even repulsive aliens is animated by an inner joy of living as hot or hotter than



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that which you feel beating in your own breast. To miss the inner joy of him is to miss the whole of him." And we may add: to fail to discern that the inner life of him, in all its hopes and fears, its loves and hates, its joys and aspirations, is essentially one with your own inner life, is to miss life's deepest meaning.

Men have always differed in details, yet they have agreed upon the great essentials. If you take all the different forms of Religion that the world has ever known and analyze them, you will find, after discarding the unessentials, simply this: A consciousness, coming from within, that there is back of all things and *in* all things, a Universal Presence, from which have proceeded all things. This is the fundamental consciousness of Religion. All the different religions of the world are but different dialects in one universal language.



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What more does man need, save to draw ever nearer to this Presence in the depths of his own inner consciousness? All the rest has been built around this central fact by man's ignorance, conceit and desire to dominate his fellows by a show of superior knowledge. Around this true Soul of Religion the priestcraft of the ages has built Temples and formulated Creeds, intended originally to shelter and foster in men this Soul of Religion; but they have resulted in almost shutting it out from view and stifling its innermost life. It remains for man, as his spiritual development progresses, to tear down the obstructions and lay aside the many unessential things that clog the channels of the Spirit's free expression, and thus release the veritable Soul of Religion, which has lain in bondage so long.

Thus, as we have pursued our search in the outer world of phenomena, and



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now, in the inner world of the Spirit, we have discovered that the Great Reality pervades the entire Universe, as Spirit, Life, Intelligence; but that it comes to fullest consciousness in man, as his innermost essential Self; and that this Ego or Self in man is identical, unchanging, transcending temporal limitations, and therefore, eternal and essentially one with the Supreme Reality, of which it and all other Selves are the unique manifestations in time.

"It was his faith, perhaps is mine,  
That life in all its forms is one,  
And that its unseen conduits run  
Unseen, but in unbroken line,  
From that great fountain-head divine  
Through man and beast, through grain and grass."





## MAN'S UNFOLDING CON- SCIOUSNESS

"More than once when I  
Sat all alone, revolving in myself,  
The word that is the symbol of myself,  
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
And passed into the nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into heaven.—And yet no shade of doubt  
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of self  
The gain of such large life as matched with ours  
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,  
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world."

*Tennyson, in "Ancient Sage."*



FOR centuries men have pondered the riddle of the Sphinx; but to the illumined the riddle of the Sphinx is no riddle. The strange figure that lies to-day half buried by the sands of Egypt and that has been the mute witness of a once mighty, but forever lost civiliza-



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tion, is but the striking symbol of man's development from lowest to highest, a symbol that has resisted the encroachments of Time for more than forty centuries. The lower part animal, the upper part human and the sprouting wings, epitomize the evolution of man from the physical consciousness, represented by the animal, to the soul-consciousness, represented by woman's head and breast, to the spiritual or God-consciousness, represented by the sprouting wings.

We know no lower idea than that of man still in the animal stage of consciousness, and we know no higher ideal than that of the perfected man who is conscious of his godhood. Between these two states of being we may trace the whole movement of human evolution. No theory of life and its meaning seems more universal or more unescapable than that of man's growth out



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of sin—limitations, to godhood—freedom. Every philosophy of religion and all theologies have sought, more or less imperfectly, to express in words as symbols, the truth so forcibly set forth in the figure of the Sphinx.

We have come far enough in our search for Reality to see clearly that our whole problem is the problem of consciousness; in other words, our knowledge of Reality depends on the kind or degree of consciousness to which we have attained. Our thought thus far has forced us to see that each individual is an eternal focus or self-conscious center in the Universal or God-consciousness. As the rays of sunlight focussed in the burning-glass are the same in kind (differing in degree according to the quality of the glass) as the unfocussed omnipresent light, so also is the consciousness focussed in each individual identical with the omnipres-



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ent God-consciousness which fills all space. Just as the wave rises above the surface of the ocean and is distinguished by our eyes as a "separate" wave, even though we know that its substance is identical with the ocean on whose surface it rests, so that consciousness which you call yours, and which you distinguish as self-consciousness is, nevertheless, one in essence and identity with the Universal consciousness upon whose bosom you rest.

The old materialistic hypothesis formerly predicated the axiom that there were two distinct phases of manifestation, viz., organic and inorganic. Organic life was sentient or conscious, while inorganic life was insensate, acted upon entirely by forces from outside itself. Our modern vitalistic hypothesis, however, recognizes that consciousness, in some degree, enters into everything—is the life-essence of everything, and





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that therefore the old hard and fast distinction can no longer be made between the organic and inorganic worlds.

We may postulate the following, as suggesting the more modern view: All life is conscious. All life is from the One Source. Every manifestation of this One Source expresses degrees or phases of consciousness. The degree of this consciousness fixes the status of the organism and determines its classifications, whether it is organic or inorganic, simple or complex. Thus we see that consciousness in the abstract is not a condition or accompaniment of life; it *is* life. It is one of the eternal verities. It *is*, just as Being is. The attainment of a wider area or a higher degree of consciousness does not consist, then, in acquiring something, as we accumulate things from without; we cannot add one iota to the sum of consciousness. But we can and do uncover from within



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portion upon portion of the vast area of consciousness which simply *is*, and of which our present limited consciousness is a part. The development of consciousness really consists in disclosing in, or attracting to, an individual center this phase of Being *that simply is*. "Consciousness is practically the great central light that "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Without consciousness any manifestation of Reality would be darkness. Thus when it is said, "the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not," the reference is to the true or inner Self in which consciousness exists, but which has not yet entered into the realization of its divinity.

In view of the foregoing, when we begin to trace the different stages of consciousness, we find ourselves forced to start with the lowest or mineral kingdom. That there is a distinct and sep-



arate phase of consciousness thus expressed is evident from the fact of the law of chemical affinity, i. e., a power of attraction and repulsion, which causes different atoms to respond, or refuse to respond, to certain conditions or processes more or less crude in character. This may be called sub-consciousness, in the sense that it precedes or furnishes the "first faint beginnings" of what later on we come to recognize as consciousness.

From the mineral to the vegetable kingdom we assume a step in advance, since vegetable life, measured by complexity and refinement, responds with a greater degree of sensitiveness to its environment. The movements, the actions and reactions of the individual plant cell can only be explained, we are told, by the presence of mind; and since any form of mind always implies some degree of consciousness, so we conclude



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that plant life must possess some degree of consciousness, and of a stage higher than "its first faint beginnings" in the mineral.

In all forms of animal life, from lowest to highest, there is clearly discernible a steady advance in the development of consciousness. It has always been admitted that those forms of life having the power of locomotion, involve a more complex degree of consciousness. In this phase of life, possessing the power to change its immediate environment, we perceive the beginning of that consciousness expressed as "free-will." Here, we assume, the organism recognizes itself as distinct from its environment; but this recognition does not involve sufficient consciousness to *assert* that recognition, and so we say that there is no *self*-consciousness as yet. It is the state of simple animal conscious-





ness, though much higher than that of the plant or mineral.

When we rise to the human plane, our observation of the actual facts of life reveal clearly enough three stages or degrees of consciousness. There is first the stage of Simple Consciousness in which the Knower, the knowledge and the thing known are as yet undifferentiated. This degree of consciousness is shared by young children and some primitive men with the higher animals. The horse stands out in the field, patient and placid, through hours or even days of cold and rain, simply because, not having a distinct consciousness of self, it cannot pity itself or rebel against conditions. It does, no doubt, feel discomfort, it may feel pain, but it does not project itself and think with dismay that itself will be feeling this discomfort to-morrow. The same characteristics are seen in very young children.



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In this state of simple consciousness, owing to this non-differentiation, the perception of animals and sometimes children is extraordinarily keen. Their knowledge seems to be a part of nature and to have a cosmic, universal quality, as if it were embedded in the great living intelligent Whole. Each perception seems to carry with it a kind of aura or diffused consciousness extending far around it. The recent psychologists have had much to say about this "fringe" of consciousness, much more pronounced in some people than in others. Seton Thompson speaks of animals as being "guided by a knowledge that is beyond us." In his description of the wild horse which "in spite of all reason to take its usual path" came along another and so avoided the pitfall set for it, he asks, "what sleepless angel is it watches over and cares for the wild animals?" This instinctive or intuitive



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or quasi-divine knowledge is largely lost in the second stage of human consciousness, but restored again in the third.

The second stage of human consciousness is that in which the differentiation of Knower, knowledge and the thing known has fairly set in. The consciousness of self becomes more and more distinct, and with it comes the consciousness of objects and other persons antagonizing the self. In some children the emergence of the self into consciousness is sudden, almost like a direct revelation, bringing with it the feelings of awe or wonder, and often causing alarm and even terror; in others it is the result of slow and gradual growth. But whether suddenly or gradually, this recognition of the self comes sooner or later to every child. It is the dawning of a new era in the child's development, and from that moment all of life begins to revolve around the self. As the evo-



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lution of the idea of self goes on there comes at last "a fatal split" between it and the objective side of things. The child's instinctive belief that every other person is its kindly friend, feeling toward it just as its own mother; the child's tendency to personify objects about it, and to believe that beings similar to himself are moving behind and inspiring natural phenomena—all this fades away, and the consequent sense of community of life with other people and with nature disappears.

Edward Carpenter has described this stage in the following words: "The subject and object of knowledge drift farther and farther apart. The self is left face to face with a dead and senseless world. Its own importance seems to increase out of all reason; and with the growth of this illusion (for it is an illusion) the knowledge itself becomes dislocated from its proper bearings, be-





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comes cracked and impotent and loses its former unity with nature. Objects are soon looked upon as important only in so far as they minister to the (illusive) self." As a result, in many people conceit and egotism dominate the self, the extreme form of which we call megalomania; in others, self-complacency, which is simply satisfaction with one's individual self, effectually bars all paths to progress; while to many more, owing to this deep division in consciousness, the spirit of unrest, the feeling of disharmony within, the sense of failure and sin leading to inevitable unhappiness and oftentimes despair, tend to torment the mind and react upon the body in myriad forms of disease.

This second or self-conscious stage is that in which the great mass of humanity is at present living. What we call civilization is itself the outcome of the self-conscious period of humanity's life



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on this planet. The narrow nationalism in political life, the crass individualism in our economic life, the class consciousness in social life, the wide gulfs that separate employers and employees in our industrial life, the utter confusion of ideals in our ethical life, and the shameful sectarianism of our religious life, are the inevitable and characteristic results of a civilization that has grown naturally out of the self-conscious stage in the development of humanity—a civilization founded on the idea that men and women, both in their individual and collective capacities, are essentially separate, distinct and different beings.

But despite these conditions to which this stage of self-conscious development has brought the world, we are bound to admit that self-consciousness represents a higher stage of unfolding than mere animal consciousness, in which there was no knowledge of any self, not even of



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the illusive self. The thought of self must arrive sometime to give a further unity to all experience. And it must arrive from within, because the Self is a reality through its essential oneness with the Great Reality. It is a "Son of God;" so selfness must necessarily be one of the forms of its expression. But since the mark of the individual self is its differentiation, its distinctness from the others, so we find that the first form in which the true Self fairly comes to consciousness is that of separation. This thought of "Me," is evidently another generalization, another form, whereby the true Ego at a certain stage projects, classifies and colors the world. It is right and necessary and inevitable as marking a stage in the development of the true Self; it becomes wrong and a hindrance to progress when it is regarded as the end of the self's development. For just as the faint conscious-



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ness of the mineral leads on to that of the vegetable and then the animal, just as the simple consciousness of the child leads on to self-consciousness, so self-consciousness in man is a further means to a still higher stage of consciousness. It is when we are ignorant of, or forget this law of our true evolution, that there arise those two illusions, inevitable to the stage of self-consciousness and full of sorrow and suffering to mankind: the "I" is thought of as separate; and it is thought of as perishable. We think of it as separate, because the Me and Mine, i. e., the conditions that reflect the true "I" or Self, are in the early stages quite local and limited; and therefore so long as the "I" is confused with the Me, the self must be thought of as separate, distinct and apart from others. We think of it as perishable, because it is confused with the things of





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the outer world and the perishing flux of phenomena.

“But because, sitting on the bank of a stream, my reflection in the water wavers and shifts, that does not prove that I am moving. Through a glass darkly we come at first to a knowledge of ourselves. For ages primitive man peered in ponds and streams and saw strange, obscure visions which he credited to these objects, nor perceived that they were dim images of his own person. Only at last and with greater experience did it one day flash upon him that He was different, and by no means to be confused with things. Only at last did his true identity come to him.”

So only after long experience does our true Identity come to us. Finally, with the seeming complete divorce of subject and object, of self and matter, of self and others, and all the antagon-



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isms that follow in its wake—of intellect and feeling, of body and spirit, of the individual and society—and the terrible tragedies of life and society which ensue—dawns the third stage of consciousness. When the illusion of separation is complete and the man has sounded the depths of suffering and unrest which accompany this illusion then, often suddenly, sometimes gradually, the third form of consciousness flashes or dawns upon him—that which has been called the Cosmic or Universal or Spiritual consciousness. “The object is suddenly seen, is *felt* to be one with the Self. The reconciliation is effected. The long process of differentiation comes to an end and reintegration takes its place. The Knower, the knowledge and the thing known are once more One. This form of consciousness is the only true knowledge—it is the only true existence.”



Toward this stage of consciousness, not only all of life, but the whole stupendous evolutionary process has been moving from the beginning. And it is not a theory, it is a matter of actual experience; it has been testified to in all parts of the world and in all ages of history. We shall consider some typical examples in a subsequent chapter. But of the existence of this form of consciousness there is evidence all down through history. Witnesses, far removed from each other in time and space and race and language, and perfectly unaware of each other's utterances, agree so remarkably in their testimony, that there is left no doubt that the experience is as much a matter of fact as any other human experience.

We can best illustrate and symbolize in thought the deeper meaning which cosmic or spiritual consciousness conveys. Edward Carpenter illustrates the



two orders of consciousness by the figure of a tree, on which two leaves observe each other externally for a long enough time, mutually exclusive and without any suspicion that they have a life in common. "Then the 'self'-consciousness of one of the leaves deepening inwardly (down the twig or branch) at last reaches the point whence the 'self' of the other leaf also branches off, and becomes for the first time aware of its unity with the other. Instantly its external observation of its fellow-leaf is transformed; it sees a thousand meanings in it which it never saw before. Its fellow-leaf is almost as much an expression of self as itself is; for it realizes that *both* now belong to a Larger Self—that of the spray or branch from which they both proceed."

Or, let us imagine that individuals are like enclosed pools or small seas, lying close to the ocean, but separated





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therefrom by natural barriers, some of which are thicker and stouter than others. The barrier looking oceanwards represents the form of our individuality as opposed to the Universal. It is at the barrier that our consciousness of separateness within, and from the great Whole of life, arises. The enclosed waters which are indeed of the same "stuff" as the ocean know nothing thereof, save the sound of its endless motion, perchance some tremor from its constant tidal beating, and maybe, now and again in stress of spiritual weather, a dash of its mighty spray. But here, let us say, is a barrier which is slighter than others, looser in structure, more penetrable, worn thin somehow; and through this, one day, the Ocean pours triumphantly in, uniting it with itself and probably with the adjacent pools also, giving the sense of largeness, freedom, profound joy and peace, but not



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without tremendous disturbances. The barrier of separate individuality is at last broken through; what remains of it is submerged and is felt as being submerged; the old consciousness of separateness yields to the new consciousness of close and intimate union.

This figure, for which we are indebted to Mr. Lewis, will suffice, on the understanding that the breaking down of the barrier is from within. The Ocean of Reality lies deeper within, rather than far-stretching without, the individual. It is probable that some such experience as this lies behind all the phenomena of genius and inspiration.

The analogy of natural birth is both suggestive and true. No closer blending of lives, two and yet one, can be conceived than the life of a mother and her unborn child. But between them there can be no intercourse, no moral relationship, no conscious and intelligent



union, except through separation; a separation followed by a long period of unconsciousness, succeeded by a slowly dawning recognition, ultimately giving place to full, free, intelligent affection between two, who, if they had never been separated for a time, would never have thus come together in mutual understanding and sympathetic unity. Not otherwise is it with the Supreme or Parent Spirit whence we came forth. To abide unborn, undifferentiated, in the mysterious womb of Creative Thought, would be never to experience the unspeakable joy of coming home to God, and knowing God at last. Therefore, though Thought-begotten before all worlds, our "life's star" is embodied, buried in terrestrial birth, that it may find itself at length as a personal Spirit; and in slowly dawning consciousness come to recognize not only its capacity for God but its essential oneness with



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God; and thus at last know Him, even as it has always been known by Him.

The "Fall of Man," about which theology has said so much, consisted in nothing else, then, than man's false beliefs in the possibility of separation from God. And "the atonement" is man's recognition of the falsity of the idea of separateness, and the blending of his spirit in loving union with the Eternal Spirit.

Prof. Bergson has given us a most beautiful and illuminating symbol of man's unfolding consciousness in the Fountain whose central, perpetually urgent jet represents the *élan vital* of the Creative Life, which is the "life of all that hath been made," from which intellect and matter each arise in their turn by a kind of lateral or peripheral relaxation, retardation, curving backwards, in the fashion of the fountain spray, fine as mist (intellect) above,





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and becoming heavier drops (matter) as the fall proceeds.

To put it into the words of Mr. Lewis: "Just as a mass of water, falling from a height, becomes separated before it reaches the ground into a multitude of isolated drops, so the Infinite Self descending into finite conditions is differentiated into a multitude of individual fragments. Instead of the original solidarity there is apparent isolation; instead of close and intimate cohesion there is apparent opposition; the sense of the Whole is lost in the sense of separation. Round each of the multitude of rain drops there is a well-defined circumference within which the drop is self-contained, and by reason of which it distinguishes itself and is separated from every other. Within the original water-mass, however, those well-defined boundaries did not exist, though all the drops were there. If we



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could attribute consciousness to the rain drops, we should say that they were conscious of separateness from each other, and that this consciousness—non-existent in the original water-mass—arose for each drop on the circumference surface as it gradually differentiated itself from the others in the descent. In the original mass the consciousness of union was dominant; in the rain shower, on the contrary, the consciousness of separateness would be dominant.”

Human individuals are something like that. We are the fragmentary expressions on this finite plane of time and sense of the Ultimate Reality, of a Unitary Life, of a Cosmic Self, of God. Deep in every heart there is some slumbering echo of the far-off home which we have left as we came “trailing clouds of glory” into this mortal sphere. There are in all of us some fading glimmerings



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of the "Vision Splendid," some latent pulse of that Original Life from which we can never really be cut off, any more than the rain drops can be forever cut off from their native cloud-land. For while our dominant consciousness is one of separateness both from one another and from our Primal Source, still this consciousness is of the surface self, not of the true, deep and inner Self. And just as every rain drop must return to its ultimate source in the cloud-land, after fetching a wide compass through stream and river and ocean, so man's true Self, if not here, then elsewhere, must surely find its way back to the Father's house, into a state of simple, unsullied, pure, pervasive consciousness of oneness with God, the All-life, and with all others as veritable brothers. The second stage of self-consciousness, illusory as it is, is yet a necessary stage in the development of the perfect



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knowledge and in the finding of Reality. It is clear that the third stage, or spiritual consciousness, will be of a different quality than could have been realized by those innocent beings who first "walked and talked with God in the Garden." And that added something, whatever it may be, that growth and discipline of deeper personal powers, that insight gained through "the knowledge of good and evil," will have been mediated for the Self through experience in a world wherein the consciousness of difference and opposition submerged for a time that of union and communion.

"Swiftly arose and spread around me, the peace and  
joy and knowledge that pass all the art and  
argument of earth;  
And I know that the hand of God is the elder hand  
of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the eldest  
brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers  
and the women my sisters and lovers,  
And that a kelson of creation is Love."





## EXAMPLES OF COSMIC CON- SCIOUSNESS

"Bird, O my bird, listen to me, do not close your wings.

There is no hope, no fear for you.

There is no word, no whisper, no cry,

There is no home, no bed of rest.

There is only your own pair of wings and the pathless sky.

Bird, O my bird, listen to me, do not close your wings."

*Rabindranath Tagore.*



VERY age has had its great mystics, whether as seer, prophet, sage or poet; and our modern age is no exception. But the striking fact is the recent widespread interest in the mystical experience, and the new appreciation for the true mystic both past and present.



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The remarkable output of literature on the subject in the last few years, whether from the historical, the psychological, the biographical or the religious viewpoint, is enough to make one pause and think. When Prof. William James published his great book in 1902, entitled "The Varieties of Religious Experience," he set the seal as a scientist on both the validity and the authority of the mystical experience. The steadily deepening interest in the subject is but one of the many evidences that our age is growing weary of a science that resolves the universe into the mere play and product of unintelligent forces, of a materialism that seeks only utilitarian ends, of a philosophy that sinks spiritual values in intellectual formulas and of a theology that continues to assert ancient dogmas without revitalizing them or relating them to new truth. Mind and



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heart alike are calling for something deeper, truer, more satisfying.

Out of this revival of interest in Mysticism has come not only the recognition of the need of that higher or spiritual stage of consciousness, which we have seen is the goal toward which man's life is moving, but also the reassuring realization that the goal has been reached by human beings on this planet; so that we are not discussing an impossible ideal, but one that has repeatedly been attained and, to a high degree, actually lived. Contrary to the general belief, instances of cosmic consciousness are not nearly so rare as we have supposed, although they are not at all general as yet.

Dr. R. M. Bucke, the well-known Canadian psychologist and physician, in his book, "Cosmic Consciousness," presents a specific classification of what he terms the "new" consciousness, and



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describes in detail the experiences of those in human history whom he finds have entered this third stage of development. He thus describes the characteristics of this state: "The prime characteristic of cosmic consciousness is a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence—would make him almost a member of a new species. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation, and joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these comes what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life; not a





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conviction that he shall have this, but rather that he has it already."

Dr. Bucke includes in his list of those who have attained this height of unfolding, the names of Gautama, Jesus, Paul, Plotinus, Dante, Shakespeare, Jacob Boehme, Balzac, Walt Whitman, Edward Carpenter, etc. Among the partial experiences of cosmic consciousness he brings together Gideon, Isaiah, Thoreau, Chas. G. Finney, Pascal, Richard Jefferies, Roger Bacon, Spinoza, etc.

There would certainly seem to be a common factor in the experience of all these, however varied; and the list might be indefinitely enlarged. There is the same shifting of values from the outer to the inner, from the lower self to the higher, from things to something back of things, from appearances to reality. As a result, a new light, supernal, spiritual, falls upon everything. There



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is in all cases a sense of expansion, enlargement; hope and confidence assert themselves; optimism rules. The recipient feels that he has passed from death unto life because he loves—whether it be the brethren, or the race, or the cosmos, or God, or the All.

We must here confine ourselves to a very few typical examples, referring the reader who is interested in further study along this line to the literature on the subject that is now easily accessible.

In the Orient, where the chief concern of the people for centuries has been the realization of the higher states of consciousness, we select only one out of the many interesting examples that might be adduced. Prince Gautama, of the house of Siddhartha, was born, according to the best authorities in Northern India in the year 556 B. C. We are told that as a youth Gautama, like Jesus, exhibited a serious mindedness



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and an insight into spiritual matters which astonished even the sages who gave him respectful attention. It is evident that the young Prince was subject to meditation. The sorrows of humanity weighed heavily upon his heart, and the superficial life in the wealthy and ostentatious court in which he lived, was most irksome to his frank and truth-loving spirit. "Surrounded as he was by wealth and ease, with time for contemplation and a mind given to philosophic speculation, he found no sense of comfort or permanent satisfaction in his own immunity from want and sorrow. He pondered long upon the way to become freed from 'the successive round of births and deaths;' and thus pondering, he sought solitude in which to find his questions answered. But the attainment of liberation was not easy, and the Prince suffered long and practiced self-mortification assiduously, until at length



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he was rewarded, and there arose within him the eye to perceive the great and noble truths which had been handed down; the knowledge of their nature, the understanding of their cause, the wisdom that lights the true path, the light that expels darkness." So that at last Buddha could say to his disciples, "My mind is freed from passions; is released from the follies of the world; I have gained the victory."

The Prince abandoned his heritage, his relatives, his wife, to whom he was devoted, and his infant son, not because illumination is purchasable at so terrible a price, but because his desire to *know* transcended all other desires. The inner struggles through which all the great Saviours of history have passed are due to the fact that no one individual may hope to rise so immeasurably above the plane of self-consciousness of his day,





except through intense and overwhelming desire.

Buddha became convinced that in The Absolute, or First Cause, there could be no sin, and consequently no sorrow; and so he persistently sought to inaugurate such systems of conduct and such standards of morals as would lead the disciple back to godhood. To keep the mind pure and clean was the burden of his cry, well knowing that in one's thoughts is the fertile field wherein illusions of sense-consciousness thrive. Buddha taught the way of emancipation for the soul held in bondage by means of the illusions of sense. According to his best interpreters, the state of Nirvana which Buddha assured his followers he had already attained, did not argue loss of identity, nor even translation to some other sphere after death, but rather the conscious sense of oneness with The Absolute. Sum-



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ming up the evidence that Buddha had indeed attained, to a high degree, this third stage of cosmic consciousness, we may note: A marked seriousness. The love of solitude and meditation. A deep tenderness for all forms of life. A great sympathy with the sorrows of others. The unselfish desire to help others. The firm conviction of immortality. The realization that he had attained to Nirvana, in conscious union with the All-life.

If Buddha in the Orient pointed the way, both in his own experience and in his teachings, toward the attainment of the higher, or cosmic consciousness, still more strikingly did Jesus of Nazareth, 600 years later, point the way for the Occident. Apart from all theological considerations, there can be no possible doubt that Jesus stands forth supremely among those historic characters who have attained to Cosmic Consciousness.



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Even though his exact words may be disputed, enough has come down to us through the ages to prove the fact that Jesus knew and taught the illusory character of external life, and that he was himself absolutely certain of the "kingdom within." It was this kingdom that he was forever urging his hearers to seek, rather than to live so constantly in the external; for he well knew that to dwell continually in the external or self-consciousness, could never lead to the knowledge of the true or divine Self within. *The light within* was the substance of his message; and that light, when once perceived, leads to the illumination of both the within and the without.

We are told that during his earlier years he "grew in stature and increased in favor with both God and man." Then, at the time of his baptism, he emerges into a sense of God-conscious-



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ness that henceforth dominates his life and shapes all his teachings. From this time on it is his "meat and drink to do the will of his Father." It is not "I, myself" who speak, but "God speaketh through me." "I and my Father are one." The Self he knew, and from which he lived his life and did his work, was, to him, nothing else than the divine center within, which he knew to be identically one with God.

His words, like those of all who have sought to give instruction for the attainment of freedom from externality, are capable of interpretation in various ways, according to the stage of consciousness of the individual or age that approaches them. Nothing is clearer to-day, however, than that the true key to his teachings is found in the realization that they come from one who possessed and spoke from the plane of God- or cosmic-consciousness; and there





is no question but that many of his reported sayings, as they have come down to us, have been colored and distorted by those who did not understand his viewpoint.

The simple, yet profound, statements of truth and principle that are contained in the "Sermon on the Mount," reveal Jesus as one who had experienced the very essence of the cosmic conscious state and was already freed from the illusions of the senses. In "the great paradox of Jesus," where he says, "Whosoever would save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life—the same shall save it," the meaning only becomes clear when one sees that Jesus is making the distinction between the outer, or surface life, and the inner, or divine life; between the surface self of the self-conscious stage and the true Self that knows itself to be one with the Whole. One of the most significant of



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his sayings is in the words, "Except ye become as little children, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." The possession of cosmic consciousness brings with it invariably the simplicity, the intuitive faith, the innocence of the little child. The child is pleased with natural pleasures and does not know the worldly standard of valuation.

"A new commandment give I unto you: that ye love one another." All the great illumined minds have made love the basis of their teachings because they have understood, as we shall see later, that love more than anything else, serves to break down the barriers that shut the self off from the All-life. Therefore Jesus gave no new commandments other than this. The term "Christ" and the term "Buddha" are synonymous. They both mean one who has entered into his godhood; one who has attained to cosmic or spiritual con-



sciousness, leaving forever behind the limitations of the lower self. The significant fact is that neither Buddha nor Jesus founded a religious system of worship of himself. Such systems proceeded from their followers. What they did do was to show "the Way," in terms of their own experience and of life, to Truth and Reality. And what they tried to make clear to man was that the same vital experience of God, the same spiritual consciousness into which they had entered, was possible to all men.

Passing over the ancient philosophers, Aristotle, Albertus Magnus, Plotinus, Marcus Aurelius, Socrates, Plato, Aspasia, all of whom had glimpsed, if not fully attained, cosmic consciousness; passing also the many interesting examples of the religious mystics in the middle ages, notably St. Francis of Assisi, and the later mystics of the Reformation period, we come to the consider-



ation of some striking cases in our own age.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's nature was essentially religious, though his religion was intellectual rather than emotional in character. There is ample proof that Emerson experienced the phenomenon of the sudden awakening of cosmic consciousness—a degree of which he seemed to have possessed from earliest youth. In his essay on "Nature" we find these words: "Crossing a bare common in snow puddles at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. All mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God."

Out of the lower into the higher, out of sense-consciousness into cosmic con-





sciousness, out of organization and limitations into freedom—the freedom of perfection, is the law and purpose of life. This Emerson saw with his clearness of spiritual vision. In one of his essays he says: “Liberation of the will from the sheaths and clogs of organization which he has outgrown, is *the end and aim of the world*. . . . The whole circle of animal life—tooth against tooth, devouring war, war for food, a yelp of pain and a grunt of triumph, until at last the whole menagerie, the whole chemical mass is mellowed and refined *for higher use*.”

The sense of unity, so inseparable from the cosmic conscious state, was always uppermost in Emerson's mind. His term for “the Absolute” or “God,” was “The Oversoul,” and his term meant something much greater to him than the anthropomorphic God of the average church-goer. His assurance of



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unity with this Divine Spiritual Essence was well-nigh perfect. "It is God in us that checks the language of mere petition, by a grander thought. In the bottom of the heart it is said, 'I am, and by me, O child, this fair body and world of thine stands and grows; I am, all things are mine; and all mine are thine.'"

In Emerson all the points of the cosmic conscious man are clearly apparent, viz., the complete assurance of the eternal verities, and of the inevitable victory over all sense illusions; the joyousness and sense of at-one-ness with the Universe, bespeaking an unquenchable optimism and a destruction of the sense of sin.

In Count Leo Tolstoi, that strange, lonely figure of our age—novelist, philosopher, artist and reformer—we have a most striking case of the unfolding of the cosmic consciousness. Up to prac-



tically middle age, Tolstoi was a materialist pure and simple. The new consciousness was born into existence in Tolstoi's life through terrible inner struggles and mental agonies, inevitable for him because of the nature of his heredity, education and environment. His never ceasing struggle for the attainment of the degree of cosmic consciousness which he finally reaches was almost wholly an intellectual struggle. He possessed such a power of analysis, such a depth of intellectual perception, that he must needs pursue the quest to the end, or else go mad with the strain of the questions unanswered. He could no more cease thinking upon the mysteries of life and death than he could cease breathing. Nor could he blindly trust. He must *know*.

The great change took place about his forty-fifth year. The whole trend of his thoughts turned henceforth from the



surface plane of self-consciousness to that inner Self whence issue the higher qualities of mankind. From a life of conventional habits and ideas, Tolstoi emerged a free soul. He shook off the illusion of historical life and culture and stood upon free moral ground, estimating himself and his fellows by means of an insight which ignores the world's conventions and despises the world's standards of success. "What befell me was that the life of our class—the wealthy and cultured—not only became repulsive to me, but lost all significance. All our actions, our judgments, appeared to me in a new light. I realized that it was all self-indulgence and that it was useless to look for any meaning in it. I hated myself and acknowledged the truth; now it had all become clear to me."

From this time on, Tolstoi's life was that of one who had entered into cosmic





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consciousness. Desire for solitude, a taste for the simple, natural things of life, intimacy with nature, a feeling of kinship with all who live and strive anywhere and, above all, the consciousness of his oneness with God—these were the ruling facts of his life until his death.

Poetry is the natural language of the higher consciousness; so that the true poet is also a seer, a prophet, a spiritually conscious being, at least, during his seasons of genuine inspiration. All commentators upon modern instances of cosmic consciousness unite in regarding Walt Whitman as one of the most perfect examples of whom we have any record in recent years. Moralists have criticized Whitman as immoral; religionists have deplored his lack of a religious creed; literary critics have denied his claim to high rank in the world of literature; but to-day "Walt Whitman stands unquestionably without a peer in



the roundness of his genius, in the simplicity of his soul, in the catholicity of his sympathy, in the perfect poise and self-control and imperturbability of his kindness. His biographers agree as to his never-failing good nature. He was without any of those fits of unrest and temperamental eccentricities which are supposed to be the 'sign manual' of the child of the poetic muse."

In Whitman it would seem that all petty prejudices against any nationality or class of men and women were entirely absent. He exalted the commonplace not as a pose, but because to him there was no commonplace. To him there was no high or low, no good or bad, no white or black, no rich or poor; he saw all as a part of the plan, and in its place in cosmic evolution. Unlike the earlier mystics who had sought to rise to spiritual heights through disdaining the flesh, Whitman strikes a new note



—the nothingness of evil as such, the righteousness of the flesh and the holiness of human love—which makes him the prophet of a new Dispensation.

Illustrative of his sense of unity with all of life are these lines:

“Voyaging to every port, to dicker and adventure;  
Hurrying with the modern crowd, as eager and  
fickle as any;  
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to  
knife him;  
Solitary at midnight in my back-yard, my thoughts  
gone from me a long while;  
Walking the hills of Judea, with the beautiful gentle  
God by my side;  
Speeding through space—speeding through Heaven  
and the stars.”

Whitman had the power to so feel with others, as to become for the time the very person or thing he was contemplating. His perception of Eternity as an ever-present reality was most characteristic of him. Birth and death became nothing more, nor yet less, than



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events in the procedure of Eternal Life. God and heaven were not separated from him; they were every day facts. In Whitman we find an almost perfect realization of immortality here and now, and of blissfulness of life and the complete harmony and unity of his Self with *all that is*.

If any one imagines that Whitman was not religious let him read the following:

"I say that no man has ever yet been half devout  
enough;  
None has ever yet adored or worshipped half  
enough;  
None has begun to think how divine he himself is,  
and how certain the future is."

The stage of consciousness to which Whitman attained was like the experience of one immersed continually in a sea of light and love; all consciousness of evil had been erased from his mind; he experienced the keenest joy in na-





ture and in the childlike pleasures of every day things; he was "sure" of immortality, and he knew himself as One with the All-life.

We might multiply examples, did not the limits of space forbid, but these few typical instances may serve to illustrate more clearly the meaning of the higher consciousness in human life. But some reader may object that these are exceptional lives—the great Saviours of the race, men of genius, with whom the ordinary man or woman can have nothing in common.

This is the vital question for us: are these "exceptional" lives, exceptional in endowments, or only in the degree of development they have attained? Do they belong, as it were, to a different species of the race, or are they simply farther on, in the unfolding of their latent possibilities, than are the rest of us? Since "human nature *is* the same"



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and we all have the same essential "stuff" in us, the function of the exceptional man anywhere is not to set forth an ideal, impossible of attainment by the average life, but rather to reveal the possibilities of development that lie open to every man and woman. Jesus never becomes in the truest sense the Saviour, until he wakens in us the realization that we can be like him, i.e., that his experience of the higher, spiritual consciousness may one day be ours.

But it is not only the great Saviours, prophets and seers who prove to us another higher stage of consciousness. For to almost every individual there come flashes or glimmerings of the same thing in those moments of exaltation, or intuition, which form the basis of religion, art, literature, and even much of practical life. The difficulty is that we do not recognize such common experiences for what they really are, and so we do



not let them lead us on into the fuller unfolding of the consciousness within.

Such glimpses of the life of Reality are, however, much more general and frequent than is ordinarily supposed. Prof. James quotes the experience of Mr. Trine, who says: "I know an officer on our police force who has told me that many times when off duty and on his way home in the evening, there comes to him such a vivid and vital realization of his oneness with this Infinite Power, and the Spirit of Infinite Peace so takes hold of and so fills him, that it seems as if his feet could hardly keep to the pavement; so buoyant and exhilarated does he become by reason of this inflowing tide." Prof. Buckham tells of a laundry agent who told him that many times on his rounds he had had such an experience of the presence of God that it seemed to him as if God were right on the wagon seat with him.



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The crudeness of the conception of some of these experiences does not affect their validity. And Prof. Buckham adds: "If the hearts of many reserved and unexpressive people could be disclosed, who can doubt that many a hidden mystic experience would be revealed, of astonishing depth and meaning?"

In times of illness, or when the departure of some loved one brings the sense of an unseen reality, or when listening to some music, or when alone with nature, or out under the stars, many a man who has seemed to others, and perhaps to himself, but a hard-headed, cold-blooded, practical man of affairs, finds himself in the close presence of the Great Reality.

From this viewpoint, we may well question whether there are any persons who do not at times approach the border-land that looks upon the higher ranges of spiritual consciousness. The





difficulty is that while the mystic sense is so general, so deep-seated, so human, in most persons it is hardly more than germinal. Other qualities are disproportionately developed—shrewd selfishness, love of ease, the animal nature is too often uppermost. But above all, it is our ignorance of the true end and purpose of life in the unfolding of the inner consciousness that postpones the day when the “awakened man” shall tread the earth, magnificent in all his God-like qualities.

As Maeterlinck says: “We await, I know not what happy coincidence, when it may so come about that the eyes of our soul shall be open at the very moment that something extraordinary takes place. But in *everything that happens is there light*; and the greatness of the greatest of men has but consisted in that they had trained their eyes to be open to every ray of this light.”



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"I go to prove my soul!

I see my way as birds their trackless way,  
I shall arrive. What time, what circuit first,  
I ask not; but unless God send his hail  
Or blinding fire balls, sleet or stifling snow,  
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive;  
He guides me and the bird. In His good time!"

*Browning's "Paracelsus."*



OUR life on this planet, in whatever other terms it may be defined, is fundamentally a great School of Experience. We may have had many experiences in former existences; we shall doubtless have many more in the Great Beyond to which we are all moving. But, however that may be, we know that



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birth into this world ushers us into a School of Experience in which there is no vacation, not even for a day or an hour, till we pass through the portals of death. Every feeling, every thought, every act, from the cradle to the grave, even that which goes on in the sub-conscious realm of being during sleep, are all inseparable parts of the sum total of Life's Experience for us.

There can be no question as to the general function of human experience. It is through experience that we grow physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. It is experience that teaches us the meaning and uses of the body, the powers and possibilities of the intellect, the principles and ideals of character-building. The deeper lessons of life, like the lessons of patience, perseverance, courage, charity, trust, hope, etc., cannot be imparted; they can only be learned, we say, in the School of Expe-



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rience. But this is not the whole, nor even the most important function that experience is designed to play in our lives. We send our boys and girls to College, because we want them to become familiar with the languages, with science, with history and literature, with ethics and philosophy; and yet this is not all that we expect the College course to yield. Beyond all the information they may gain in these various fields, we expect that the training and discipline of the College course will develop in them mental powers that are now only dormant, evolve in them a character that is now chiefly potential; so that when College days are over they may be fitted to take their places in life as strong, independent, thoughtful and useful men and women. So in the school of life, it is the primary and by far the most important function of experience, not merely to teach us this or that lesson, or





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help us to understand any particular faculty we possess; but rather to help us find the true Self, to educe in us the latent and potential; in a word, to make possible the unfolding of our inner consciousness from the simple consciousness of the child, through the self-conscious stage of maturer life, to the higher or cosmic or spiritual consciousness of the symmetrical personality.

There are multitudes who have never come to the realization that this is primarily the purpose of all experience; and yet nothing is clearer than that all of life consists, at bottom, of the unfolding of consciousness, and that it is through experience only that such unfolding can take place. To grasp and hold this truth will furnish the only clue for the right understanding of life's experiences as they come to us.

Mr. Beresford in his recent trilogy, "Jacob Stahl," describes in the last vol-



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ume the plot of a novel which his hero plans to write. He conceived the idea of a man who should react tremendously to the different environments into which he was thrown, so that he became a different person in each new set of circumstances. Finally, after several years of this sort of kaleidoscopic existence, he discovers that he has a personality of his own that has been unconsciously growing out of all his reactions to experience. As he tried to picture to himself the sort of a personality such a man would have, he comes to the conclusion that he would be a kind of God, understanding every one, not condemning any one, because he had lived every kind of life himself; all-wise and all-loving, because of the insight gained through his many different kinds of experience. If we could conceive of a man living long enough to share every possible experience and live every kind of a life, we can



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see how out of such a universal experience he would of necessity come to know and understand, like God. It is the inevitable limitations of our experiences, in this brief space of earthly existence, that prevent us from seeing things as they really are; so that it becomes axiomatic that the broader and deeper the experience, the more truly in harmony with reality is one's knowledge. In subsequent chapters we shall think more specifically of three typical experiences in every life,—pain, moral conflict and love—and how they assist in the unfolding of consciousness, the accomplishment of life's true end; but for the present we must confine our attention to the meaning of experience in general.

One of the deepest cries of the human heart is the question, "Why does this happen to me?" Sometimes it proceeds from a devastating sorrow, sometimes out of an almost overmastering joy.



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The problem is only made more poignant by the common reflections, "I did not seek it," "I do not deserve it," "It is not my fault."

We note at once that this is peculiarly a *human* cry, the cry of a self-conscious being. We cannot conceive of its being uttered by even the higher animals. The bee does not ask such a question when it sees all its treasured store of honey taken from the hive; nor the water rat when its nest is flooded and its young destroyed by a sudden rise in the river; nor the spider whose web you ruin by a careless sweep of your hand; nor the dog leaping to his plate of tempting bones; nor the horse released from the confinement of the stable to enjoy the freedom of the open field. Such common incidents in the lives of the lower animals are essentially one with the accidents, surprises, sorrows and joys which constitute the normal experience





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of every human life. But it takes a human being to register a complaint. The note of interrogation is peculiarly a human note. The faculty of "wondering why" is a human faculty. Though the right to complain may exist lower down the scale, the ability to complain issues first in man. And this ability to ask the question, "Why does this happen to me?" while it reveals the capacity for mental pain and anguish, is at the same time the assurance that somewhere the answer to the question must be found.

Once again, when we begin to reflect on what happens to us, we realize that this three-score-years-and-ten life is not limited to itself, and can only yield its secrets when placed in the wider context of life as a whole. The fundamental law of the universe is the law of Cause and Effect, which means that every effect anywhere must have had somewhere



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its adequate cause. This is just as true of human experience as it is of solar systems and geological disturbances. Nothing ever happens in human experience arbitrarily or capriciously, for even the most trivial happening must have had its cause. But the causes do not lie upon the surface; they are many times deeply hidden. And this brief fraction of eternity accorded to our life here, is all too short to explain all that is happening to us now. Many of the causes of the deeper experiences of our present lives lie far back in the past—the past of the race, of our more immediate ancestors, of our own selves. So that a full understanding of all that is happening to us now, would involve a full knowledge of all the deep-lying causes in the far-away past as well as in the immediate present—a knowledge that we do not and cannot now possess. It is enough, however, if we grasp the



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law that for everything that happens to us there must be somewhere the adequate cause, and that therefore simple justice is always coming to us, whatever form our experience may take.

No satisfactory answer to our question, "Why is this happening to me?" can be given until we answer two prior questions: First, "Who am I?" and second, "What precisely is happening to me?" When they are answered the complaint ceases almost automatically.

The first question we have already considered at length. On the plane of self-consciousness there is always distinction and often opposition between the self and the not-self. Our first knowledge of the self is accompanied by, and to a large extent mediated through, the sense of an external world that is apparently different and separate from the Me. Thought arises in this opposition, and interplay between sub-



ject and object takes place. In our ordinary life we all divide the universe into two parts: on one hand there is Me, and on the other, there is all the rest. The ultimate result is that we come to regard "the external world as something very set, fixed, intractable, threatening, pitiless; something placed over against us, lavish at times with its delights, but containing always the possibility of bruise and breakage to us."

The theologies of the past, under the influence of the same type of self-consciousness, have taught men to regard God as an external Being, whose favor must needs be continually sought and held, precariously enough, by means of gifts and worship. There is imbedded in the seventh chapter of Job a terrible figure of God with a magnifying glass, kneeling, as it were, among the grasses of Time, singling out with his glass some tiny insect—man—for close obser-





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vation; watching his every movement, putting obstacles in his way ever and anon to see how he will act; punishing him, if He so pleases, or amusing Himself by perplexing and teasing him. It is due to some such view as this—of ourselves as being isolated, cut off, separated, alien in the midst of the universe—that the problem of evil has been so dark and stubborn.

But as we have seen, the teachings of modern science and philosophy, with the newer theology coming along somewhat tardily, converge upon the conclusion that the individual Self is not thus separate from all else; that we do not stand upon our peculiar points of individuality like the oriental elephant upon the tortoise, which itself stands upon nothing; that we are united in one common ocean of life with all that has been made; that we are members together in the living organism of Nature, and that the



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Universal Life, or God, dwells in each of us.

Now as soon as we attain the viewpoint that we are not isolated from, but are living parts of, and in, the great stream of Life that is ever-flowing; that the Universe is not alien to us, but that we are organically related to it; that God is not Some One set over against us, but is the essence and secret of our deepest Selves—the question, “Why does this happen to me?” assumes an altogether different aspect. For if, escaping the dominance of this idea of separateness, a man could reach, if only tentatively, the conviction that he, with all that is happening to him, is part of and wholly within the only Life that is; that he somehow *is* that Life manifesting itself in a particular way; that, therefore, all that happens to him, happens not in a world in which there are two hostile or alien camps set over against each other



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with a gulf fixed between, but in one undivided and deeply harmonious Whole—he would approach that point of vision where he could say with the elect of earth, “What is well with thee, O Universe, is well with me;” and would therefore accept whatever experience came to him, knowing that when once assimilated it would prove to be one of the “all things working together for good.”

Thus, whatever comes to me, comes not as the decree of some blind Fate, operating in the external universe, nor as the arbitrary will of some God who dwells afar, but rather as the all-wise and all-loving unfolding of the Universal Life in and through my individual life center; so that I am never alone in any experience of life, and it is not a figure of speech but literal truth to say that my experiences are God's experiences, and His experiences are mine.



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When we ask the second question, "What precisely is happening to me in any experience?" we realize at once, as we have seen in a preceding chapter, that the crux of every experience is in the one who experiences it. The central fact of every experience is not expressed by saying, "Something is there impressing me"; but rather, "I am reacting in a certain way to something." Every experience involves some action on the part of the one who experiences it. He may rebel against it, or seek to escape it, or receive it joyously, or be quiescent under it; but even this last requires an effort, and all effort assists development. All experience mediates the growth of the true Self; so that in every experience the real and important thing is what is happening within you, i.e., how you are reacting to the experience.

It is only half the truth to say that experience moulds us. We all feel the





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pressure of experience; but the sense of pressure arises from two opposing strains, from within outwards, as well as from without inwards. It is always the reaction of the Self to experience that gives "form" and "character" to it. We are placed in a world that is full of hazards and hardships, successes and failures, joys and sorrows, problems and temptations; it is futile to account for their being there; it is equally futile to try to conceive of better possible worlds; it is absurd to imagine that these various experiences are being manipulated in respect to each individual by an overwatching, scrutinizing God, to test or tease or punish us. The one conclusion to which we are forced is that there is in human beings an inherent power of reacting to experiences of every kind; and through these reactions, of growing, developing, realizing the potencies of the spiritual Self.



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The ancient word, "Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee," does not mean that a great many sinister and unwelcome things shall not happen to us at the circumference of life—the only place where "things" do happen—but if we have found and fixed our true life-center in the divine Self within, we shall find the right reactions even to them, and what seems evil shall minister to our own truest growth.

The value of any experience, then, lies in what it elicits within the self; and the secret of life is to find the right reaction to experience. The man who has found his true Self and knows it to be One with the Whole, has discovered this secret; but we need to realize that every reaction, whether right or wrong, is always leading toward the full disclosure of life's true meaning.

Where most of us make the mistake



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is in seeking to escape any experience that we feel to be hard or trying or unpleasant or irksome; but this is obviously wrong, for the "seeking to escape" is itself experience, and all we do is to substitute a negative for what might have been a positive experience. In a recent novel entitled "The Fear of Living," the author describes most vividly how this "fearful" attitude toward Life dominates many in this modern age, and how it inevitably results in negative, cowardly and undeveloped lives. To rebel against an experience, to fight it, to hold it at arm's length, is not only exhausting but futile, for it leaves the experience still to come. Like the boy in school, who fails in his term exams and has to take his work over again, so we fail of the test and have to meet the experience somewhere once again. This tendency in us all to dodge all hard or unwelcome experiences really means



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that we are refusing the intimate knowledge and inner growth that alone can come through that particular experience.

What is really happening, then, in every experience of life, is that some potentiality, some latent power of the true Self is being realized. It would seem, then, that if the Self's true identity is the Greater Self of all things, and if its destiny is the ultimate realization of this divine Selfhood in its fulness, then every kind of experience may be necessary.

The form in which the Self may react to an experience reveals how far along in its unfolding that Self has come. All forms of experience may be necessary, therefore, not in the sense that the form the experience takes is imposed by some Fate, or God outside, but rather because the Self, at that particular stage of its unfolding, reacts in such a way as to





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give that particular form to the experience.

In our conventional thinking we divide all experiences into good and bad, and we have been taught to avoid the one class and seek the other; but if the crux of any experience is in the Self's reaction to it, we shall find considerable difficulty in apportioning every experience to one or the other of these two classes. Experiences, viewed externally as "bad," may mean supremest good, because of the form of the Self's reaction to them; while experiences we call "good" may prove to be "bad" or harmful, because of the form of the reaction. Among the so-called criminals of society there are those who, through "bad" experiences, have come to a deeper realization of the higher stage of consciousness than many respectable citizens who have never violated the law. The poor, painted creature of the streets, forsaken



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by all, who dies alone and is buried in the potter's field may, nevertheless, carry into the Great Beyond a higher degree of spiritual consciousness, growing out of her "bad" experiences, than many of the smugly self-complacent Christians who never recognized her as sister in this life. Perhaps Jesus had this in mind when he said to the morally and religiously respectable people of his day: "The publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you." Those strange words of Jesus on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" suggest the thought, that he who had "been tempted in all points like as we are," needed yet to know and share the experience of those who (wrongly) believed themselves to be forever separated from God and finally forsaken by Him, before he could reach the perfect height of Saviourhood.



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As Edward Carpenter says: "Before we can be 'even as the gods' we must partake of the fulness of the knowledge both of 'good' and of 'evil.' All experience is necessary, and since this is so it will be provided in the nature of things. It may require the 'other heights (and depths) in other lives,' but we may be sure that all we need awaits us. It is seeking us out in its own time; there is no need to hurry here and there, seeking many different experiments in experience; but we must not fail to keep our appointment with the experience that is at hand. All experience counts. It is the pathway to Paradise."

There are many ante-chambers in life before the Holy of Holies is reached—the pleasures of the body, the joys of the intellect, art, morality, the externals of religion; and one may tarry long in the ante-chambers, "lost in strange mazes, wandering in sin and sorrow,



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lonely, despised and fallen." The ante-chambers are important; "the echoes of the Master's voice are heard there, his foot-prints seen; but all these must be passed through and left behind, if He is to be met at last face to face."

As we have seen, man's birth is a descent into conditions of time and sense, where the material clogs for a time the channels of the spiritual, where man awakes to mortality and moves to and fro over the world among appearances. —"Forgetful of his true self, he becomes a self-seeker among the shadows." And nothing results but strife and conflict, disgust and disappointment; so at length he begins his home journey, urged and sustained alike by the witness of that "imprisoned splendor," which he finally comes to recognize as his true, divine Self.

"What are all the dreams of the Better Land, the quests for the Earthly





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Paradise, the Utopias, Eldorados, the fabled Islands of the Blest, the Sangreal, the Elixir of Life; what signify the mystic Scroll of the Zodiac, the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies, the Host, the Gospels of all lands, the proclamations of the Resurrection of Christ, of Osiris, and of all the rest; but the human reading of the vast and vague hieroglyph which the Great Self within the soul casts by its own light upon the curtain of self-consciousness."

All the high ideals, the lofty dreams, the earnest aspirations of humanity are not mere inventions of some pious visionary, nor yet delusive mirages which torment the overwrought mind of the weary traveller, else would all of life be but cruel and tragic mockery; they are the projections on to the clouds of the future of that which alone is Real and Permanent, and which is secreted with-



in the heart of the individual and the race.

We may yet have far to go;—much of stress, conflict, passion, the dashing against the barriers of self, the endless contest with self-love, self-interests, selfishness, the lonely struggle of the soul, the baffling problems, the retracing of steps, the continual dealing with experiences of all kinds. We are all out on the main road, and “there is no bar. The paths are all open; the sign-posts few; each must find the clue for himself, the exit from the labyrinth.”

But the deliverance is sure. With Paracelsus we cry, “In some time, His good time, I shall arrive”; for the simple fact is that we are not finding something so much as Something is finding us. All experience counts. Every experience is good to the Self that reacts rightly, and every wrong reaction only hastens the day when the true Self shall



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read aright the meaning of all that comes.

Thus far we have thought of experience as that which elicits the true Self, furnishing the resistance against which latent powers and beauties are developed, until the Self knows itself as One with the All-life. Changing this figure, we may regard experience as adding perpetually to that inward pool wherein, when it shall be full, the man will see himself reflected in the pure "mirror of God" and be satisfied.

To quote again from Carpenter: "Let us return once more to the child regarding its own reflection in the tiniest of pools. So small is the little mirror that it only reflects the smallest part of the child—a lock of hair or a portion of its dress. The child does not in the least recognize what the reflection is. But it has a water can and pours water into the pool, and the pool grows. Now



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the child can see its own entire hand in the water. It becomes fascinated. But the pool keeps on growing and more and more of its body becomes visible, till at last, lo! the child can see itself complete.

“So to us. Each new feeling, thought, act, each new experience that is added to the Me, is like a drop of water added to the pool, till it becomes large enough, —the Me becomes sufficiently universal —to reflect the universality of the ‘I.’ Thus the vision of the true Self at last arises, through the enlargement of experience, with wonder and joy indescribable: the realization of a Self united to all others and eternally one with the Universal Life.”

Or, we may picture experience more dynamically, as like the rain which percolates through soil and rocks into some subterranean reservoir until the volume of water becomes such that it overflows;





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so experience may be regarded as daily and hourly swelling the inner pool of consciousness until, like the breaking forth of a fountain, a new and higher quality of life manifests itself from within.

Or, from still another viewpoint, experience may be regarded as working by a process of attrition which gradually wears down the barrier between the individual and the universal; or rubs the mortal envelope, the surface membrane of self-consciousness, the film of separated individuality, thinner and thinner and so brings us at length to the "ecstatic deliverance."

It would seem, then, that in one whose life has been rich in experience, and who has learned out of experience how to react to all that comes with wisdom, the Kingdom of Reality should be close at hand. Almost any experience, even the most trivial, may bring about the long



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desired deliverance and set the true Spiritual Self free. It may come like "the thief in the night;" it may come like Pippa's song, falling on unsuspecting ears, and forever altering the trend of life. The cause has been long at work and accumulating; the occasion may be trivial. "The main thing is that the messenger is perhaps even now at your door. A little child, a breath of air, an old man hobbling on crutches, a bee lighting on the page of your book—who knows whom He may send?"

For Amiel, it was the sight of three butterflies; for Moses, the sun setting behind a thorn bush; for Linnæus, a flame of mountain gorse; for Emerson, a bare common under a clouded sky at twilight; for Jesus, a dove hovering over the tamarisks on Jordan's banks. "Ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh"; and the true coming of the Son of Man to any life con-



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sists in the awakening of the Spiritual Self to its Identity with the All-life.

Most beautifully has this expectant mood been voiced by the prophet-poet:

"That day—the day of deliverance—shall come to you in what place you know not; it shall come but you know not the time—

In the pulpit while you are preaching the sermon, behold! suddenly the ties and bands . . . shall drop off.

In the prison One shall come; and the chains which are stronger than iron, the fetters harder than steel, shall dissolve—you shall go free forever—

All tools shall serve. The spade shall serve. It shall unearth a treasure beyond price.

The writer shall write, the compositor shall set up, the student by his midnight lamp shall read, a word never seen before—

The engine driver shall drive in faith through the night. With one hand on the regulator he shall lean sideways and peer into the darkness—and, lo! a new signal, not given in the instructions, shall duly in course appear.

The Magdalen shall run down to answer the knock at the door, and Jesus her lover himself shall enter in."

It is enough for us to catch the vision of Life's true unfolding and discern the



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goal whither Life is tending. Then we can in calmness and serenity await the coming of all experiences, knowing that "Whatever is, is best." And in this confident and expectant mood, we shall not be surprised when the great day of the arrival of the true Self shall dawn.






## THE PURPOSE OF PAIN

"By giving to our pains a place of use and necessity, not central in ourselves but extending to others, the whole aspect of pain would be changed. A Christ, a mother, a martyr and a lover have this vision, and the nearer we are to their point of view the less we worry about the sordidness of pain, because we are concerned with its mystery and beauty."

*James Hinton.*

N some form Pain comes to all of us, sooner or later, but to most of us its deeper meaning is as darkly veiled as is the meaning of death. The usual attitude to both pain and pleasure is the attitude of the child toward punishment and reward. Even those who have learned to bear pain with courage, rather resent it than welcome it. Few of us believe



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with Nietzsche that it is the father of pleasure or that it is one of the most educative gifts of life.

When we begin to reflect, we are impressed with the evidence that in all human experience there exists something unseen, some fact beyond our present consciousness; so that the seeming of our life is not the whole truth of it. Every experience that comes is seen to be not an end in itself, but a means to an end; so that it always means more than appears on the surface. The more deeply we reflect, the more clearly do we feel that, in every experience, something is being wrought out or accomplished in us, something not clearly perceived or fully understood, and that does not stop with us but reaches far on into other lives as well. Each experience leaves us somewhat different than we were before, but it is clear that all the effects of any experience could not pos-



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sibly be perceived by us. We see and feel things only as they affect our senses, i.e., in small part and for a short time. They soon pass from us, and while they have their place in consciousness they never reveal all they contain; often those which are the greatest seeming to us the least.

In exploring the material world we soon find that in order to understand any part of it aright we must recognize facts and forces which are unseen and do not come within our direct perception, e.g., the pressure of the air, the motion of the earth, the hidden force lurking in unseen atoms, of chemical affinity, electricity, or the vibrations of the ether. Just so, in all our experiences, there is some unseen relation to spiritual ends within ourselves, and beyond ourselves in the life of the Whole.

If this thought could be accepted as the truth, it would completely change



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our thought of life and our interpretation of all experience. In so far, then, as it can be shown that pain, in its many different forms, does perform a valuable and "lifeward" function both for the individual and the race, in just so far the problem of pain may be said to be solved.

In seeking the meaning of pain, we must distinguish at the outset between the pain that seems to be absolutely necessary, i.e., that seems to inhere in the very essence of life itself, and the large amount of pain which is unnecessary, for which our own ignorance or carelessness or selfishness is alone responsible. How much of the world's suffering is caused by vice and crime, the wilful or careless breaking of physical or moral laws! How much of the pain is caused by words that need not have been spoken, or acts that need never have been done! How much of the pain





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we suffer through illness might have been avoided! How many parents' hearts have been broken, how many children's lives have been embittered, how many wives are crushed, how many husbands made unhappy—and all so needlessly! How many people are injured because we wish to get ahead a little faster! How many men have endeavored to crush a competitor, no matter how much it might cost him in wealth or suffering! How much suffering do we bring on ourselves through envy or jealousy, through personal antipathies and hatreds in a thousand forms! How many cruel wars—the concentration of every vice and crime and evil,—have been absolutely needless wars! We have no right to charge all the unnecessary pain and suffering of the world, which is due solely to man's selfishness, against the Government of the Universe.



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There still remains, however, a large residuum of pain unaccounted for—and the first question that presents itself is: Why does man possess the capacity for pain in any form? There are a few fundamental facts which must be self-evident to all who think carefully on the problem of pain.

1. If we are to exist at all, then the possibility of pain, of a certain amount of it, is inevitable. Existence, as we know it here, involves of necessity the possibility of suffering. Think for a moment. A delicately organized nervous system which is capable of exquisite pleasure, must be equally capable of exquisite pain. For it is capable of feeling, and if it can feel that which is agreeable, naturally it can feel that which is disagreeable; so that unless some miracle keeps one from ever making a mistake of any kind, then pain must come. We cannot imagine a



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piano that, rightly touched, produces perfect harmony, that would not under a blunderer's hands produce a discord. The possibility of feeling anything, then, carries with it the possibility of feeling pain.

2. It is absolutely necessary that we should feel pain if we are to continue to exist. If a race of beings, incapable of feeling pain, could be brought into existence in this world, they would be wiped out of existence within a month; simply because they would be continually getting into the way of the great forces of the universe; and, unless it hurt so that they learned to keep out of the way, they would inevitably be destroyed. Suppose one could fall into the fire without being burned, or into the water without being drowned, or over the precipice without being killed; suppose it did not hurt to break an arm or a leg or to be run over by an automo-



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bile—if none of these things hurt, how would we learn to keep out of the way?

3. Still more fundamentally, there could be no consciousness if there were no pain, because the very basis of consciousness is the fact of contrast. If all the world were of one color, there would be no color; and it would be as though we were blind. If chairs and tables were exactly alike, who would ever know that there were such things as chairs and tables? If there were no such thing as pain, there could be no such thing as pleasure. If one had never suffered, he could not know that he had ever been happy. If we had been perfectly free from pain from the beginning, it would mean nothing to us, and there would be nothing to rejoice in. It is only against a background of pain that we can taste the ecstasy of innumerable joys.

With these preliminary facts in mind,





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we must note still further that, as respects large areas of pain, it is unquestionably clear that pain performs a valuable and "lifeward" function.

From the biological viewpoint, pain has been called "the guardian angel" of the body. If it were not for pain animal life would soon be extinguished. Bodily pain prompts us to many actions which are necessary for the maintenance or security of life, and is the clear warning against things that are harmful. Cold and hunger, for example, lead us to feed and clothe ourselves; and when excess takes place, there come satiety and disgust. A man's life is never so endangered as when the attack is made so insidiously and subtly that, for some reason, it does not ascend into consciousness as pain; the sentinels of the body are asleep and the enemy gets past them into the citadel. Thus pain is felt to be an im-



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perative warning, and so an education.

But this is only one side of the facts. If pain is often beneficial as a warning, it is also often harmful, and in most cases it is liable to exceed, in an immense degree, the amount needful to secure its beneficial influence. In many diseases, the pain is one of the chief sources of their danger by the exhaustion it produces. Besides, our sensibility itself seems to be more developed for pain than for pleasure. Our power of suffering seems to be in excess of our power of enjoying. Intense enjoyment can last but a short time and then comes fatigue; but pain may continue undiminished, even growing in severity until life itself succumbs. To say that pain produces beneficial effects as a "warning sign" in the body, is not an adequate explanation. For pain goes far beyond mere warning and seems to exist independently of its useful effects.



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Its source lies deeper, and its ends are larger.

But again, pain is clearly the minister of justice. Pain follows the infractions of "the Laws," in the forms of bodily disease or want, of mental anguish, or social vengeance. The fundamental law of Cause and Effect, that "what a man sows that shall he also reap," is the ever-present means of bringing simple justice to every one; and from the suffering that ministers justice, no real man ever shrinks; he knows that in his pain he is learning the lesson. Yet this also is inadequate to explain all the facts. For all the sorrow that comes to human lives, how small a part falls upon the specially guilty; how much seems rather to seek out the innocent and the good! To what sufferings are children subject, for which they are in nowise responsible, and indeed, all who are not able to protect themselves!



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No violated law can be shown in the destruction by cyclone or earthquake, or in the poverty that oppresses multitudes of lives. Pain does indeed avenge the majesty of violated law, physical and moral, and thus becomes educative; but since the innocent everywhere suffer with the guilty, it does not exist for this alone; it must serve larger ends.

There is another, still higher, end that pain clearly fulfills. It disciplines and corrects the erring, chastens and subdues the proud, weans from false pleasures, teaches true wisdom. It is obvious that in multitudes of cases pain has a purifying influence, acting on life as a "refiner's fire."

"For as gold must be tried by fire  
So the heart must be tried by pain."

All this is true, but only in some cases. How often pain fails to teach or subdue, but rather hardens, embitters or





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even perverts! That pain refines many lives is unquestionable, but what about the men and women whom it coarsens, whom it rouses only to bitterness or whom it plunges into despair? The simple fact is that, so far as we can see, there are pains innumerable which benefit neither the body nor the mind; which punish no moral wrong in the individual, at least, and which vindicate no material law against conscious breach. Take, for instance, the sufferings of the industrial workers, condemned to reluctant idleness, which lead so often to discontent and bitterness of heart, and even to moral deterioration.

These and similar considerations cover large areas of the human experience of pain, and to some extent explain it, i.e., demonstrate its "lifeward" function, show it to be good; and yet it is also clear that these beneficial uses reveal only secondary purposes of pain;



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they do not conduct us to its source, nor disclose to us its deeper meaning. We must, therefore, accept pain as a fact, existing by a deep necessity—though all its many expressions are by no means necessary—having its root in the essential order of the universe. If we are to understand it we must learn to look upon it not as punishment, but as blessing; not as an enemy, but as one of life's best friends. To gain this viewpoint, we must look beyond ourselves; we must learn to think of ourselves as parts of the greater Whole.

The psychologist has pointed out that there is a certain continuity between pleasure and pain, alike in the physical and psychical experiences. The same sensation may be pleasurable in its milder form, and painful if it is intensified beyond a certain limit. But, strangely enough, in some cases a further prolongation of the sensation issues in a new



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pleasure, different in quality from the first.

A noted traveler has described the effect produced by Arabic music in these words: "The performance begins with a pleasant phrase which pleases the ear. But the phrase is repeated and repeated *ad nauseam*, until the listener longs for it to cease. He hates, but is obliged to hear it; and then, presently, the pain of it fades away, and a strange mesmeric and ecstatic swoon takes its place."

This is explained by saying that a sensation strong enough to be painful has the effect of wakening an under-plane of consciousness which before had been dormant. As felt in this under-plane, the sensation is mild and so pleasurable. In the case of the soldier, the rush and fury of battle bring into relief the wild enthusiasm for cause and country, perhaps long dormant within him; and swept along on the tide of



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these new feelings, he forgets the pain of fatigue, of hunger and even of wounds. The fireman who rushes into the smoke-filled and burning building is conscious at first only of the pain and discomfort, but these are soon forgotten in the deeper feelings aroused by his heroic efforts to rescue human lives from death. Psychologically regarded, pain "gets through" somehow, and rouses the deeper regions of consciousness into life and activity. It is thus seen to be the means of psychic growth and inner unfolding.

"It would almost seem that one ought to regard the human being as composed of layers, many perhaps, one within the other—something like the 'shells' described by the Theosophists. Then one can imagine that an agitation, reaching the outer sheath might produce a reaction there which would be felt as pleasure. But after a time as the agitation





increased, it would begin to be too strong and, tending to disintegrate and damage the sheath, would be felt as pain. With the continuation of the process, however, the agitation would penetrate through and reach the second sheath, where it would be felt as pleasure again. The first sheath would begin to wither and the second sheath would begin to grow. So the process might go on from sheath to sheath, even to the very centre of life. The whole process is one of growth. At each stage there is pain, and the separation and rejection of a husk; and at each stage there is pleasure, and the awakening of a new and more central life."

Just as the husk and the kernel of a nut are at the outset undifferentiated from each other, but as the process of ripening goes on—a process which is always in the manner of a dying to an outward self—the kernel slowly disso-



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ciates and liberates itself from the husk, until the shell is broken and the kernel becomes the seed of a new plant; so "a time comes when the inner man recognizes himself as distinct from his outer frame and sees with composure his body fade—conscious that deep within himself is the seed of a new life."

Even if the sufferings of life have failed to rouse this deeper consciousness, who can say that the pain of the "last sickness," that we so resent in the case of our loved ones, may not accomplish, in the end, what all previous experiences of pain could not effect; and even before the final dissolution takes place, "uncover" the consciousness of the spiritual and eternal Self? May not this explain the often total absence of all fear of death, as the end draws near, in persons where we should least of all expect it? At any rate, it is the testimony of the experience of



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many that when all else had failed, pain did "get through" the crust of selfish habit and materialistic thinking, and touched, loosened, set free the deeper, diviner, more satisfying life within. This does not mean that we are to seek pain and undervalue pleasure. The great secret is not to seek either suffering or pleasure, but to accept them both when they come as inspirations; in other words, never as ends in themselves but always as means to larger ends.

Now if the great end of life is the "growing of the soul," the finding of the deeper, spiritual Self within, the gradual unfolding of the inner consciousness, until one *knows* one's Self to be one with the Larger Self of the universe, then it becomes apparent that pain is the truest and best friend of the Spirit in man; for as it uncovers ever deeper and richer areas of consciousness it is, in reality, leading man back "home,"



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back from the plane of separate and isolated self-consciousness, to the plane of spiritual or cosmic consciousness, where he sees himself as part of the All-life. Pain, thus, not only reveals the inner "heart" of the Self, but it shows that "heart" to be one with the "heart" of all humanity.

"After all,  
Nearer to thy heart, O Humanity,  
By this of suffering we come.  
I know that thou canst not deny me;  
I know that each pain is a door by which I approach  
one degree nearer to thee.  
What sorrow is there but I have shared it?  
What grief, but it has removed an obstruction between me and some one else?  
Look in my face and see. You cannot bar me now.  
I pass all doors and am where I would be."

Whether pain does perform this needed ministry in our lives depends on how we react to the experience of pain; and that, in turn, depends on our view of pain and its purpose in human life.





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Here is one, for example, who has always enjoyed good health, has never had a day's illness, and does not know the meaning of physical pain. When brought into contact with sickness or physical suffering, he regards it curiously rather than sympathetically; it lies beyond the range of his experience. Then, one day, sickness comes to him, and he who has never known enforced inactivity is obliged to lie helpless and in pain, staring up at the ceiling or at the narrow walls of his sick-room. Now what this new experience of suffering does for him will depend on his inner attitude to it. He may regard his pain as the friend of life; he may hear Pain whispering: "I am not here as punishment; I am not your enemy, but I have come to lead you through experiences you have never known; I want you to understand pain and be able therefore to sympathize with all who suffer.



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Hitherto you have stood outside the Kingdom of Pain and looked at it from afar with curious but unseeing eyes. But now you are one of that great multitude of men, women and children, yes, and of dumb beasts too, that everywhere throughout the world are struggling with pain and battling for health. Feel yourself as *one* with them all, for your sufferings are the sufferings of humanity."

So with the man who has been singularly fortunate in business and has never known the meaning of "failure," who awakes one morning to find his earthly possessions swept away. For the first time he feels himself as sharing the lot of the "failures" of life, the men and women who are "down and out." Or, the man who has never committed a grievous sin, but who in the presence of some great temptation goes down before it. And in the ensuing pain of



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heart and mind, a new wave of understanding for all the moral failures and outcasts sweeps over him, and he sees himself in all of them for the first time in his life. Or, the one who has escaped the sorrow of bereavement, until some one near and dear is taken from his side; and then, alone with his grief, stretching out helpless hands into the Void, he knows himself, at last, as one with all those who, since the world's beginning, have trodden the *via dolorosa*.

These typical experiences in human life illustrate how pain may prove to be the true friend and guide of the Spirit in man, if one but react to them rightly, if one can only see that pain is always seeking to "get through" to those deeper regions, and there make possible the fuller unfolding of the inner Self. Instead of asking, "Why has this come?" we should rather ask, "What can it do for me?" It is not what we get that



matters, but what we are; not what we lose, but what we gain; not what we suffer, but what the suffering reveals in us.

Pain, more than anything else, punctures with its sharp sting the film that divides the individual from the Universal, man from God. It is the acid which dissolves the barriers of separation. It breaks through accumulated incrustations of selfishness like "a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces." It is a constriction which facilitates parturition. It is the birth-pangs of the true Self as it emerges into the consciousness of the All-life.

Just as the penetrating beam of the Spring sun coöperates with the developing, interior, as yet confined life, of the Imago, and helps burst the restraining chrysalis cerement, so that the life which formerly was bound to the lowly and earthly places manifests its reality as a





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“winged spirit” ascending into a new, more joyous, more spacious activity; so is pain the deliverer of the true Self in man. It “endures but for a moment” and “works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

What is true of the individual is just as true of society. There is pain in the social body. It has protective value. It calls attention to the presence of active, disintegrating forces. It is the index of maladjustment of parts. It is the symptom of disease. It calls aloud, not for conditional relief alone, but for reconstruction, reorganization on a new principle. Wherever pain exists in a community, or a nation, or an age, its profoundest significance is that at that point something is “getting through” the outer sheath to quicken interior forces, propagate inward growth, foster spiritual development, and ulti-



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mately to deliver to itself the soul of a people.

There is one condition under which all know that pain is not an evil but a good. This is when pain is willingly borne "for the sake of" some one else, for some principle or truth, for some noble cause. Its entire character is then altered. It is not only *a* good, but most emphatically *the good* of life. Our life reveals nothing else so excellent. All kinds of pleasures fall infinitely below it. The pains of martyrs or saviours, or the losses of self-sacrificing devotion are never classed among the evil things of the world. They are its brightest places, the culminating points at which humanity has displayed its true glory and reached its divine level, for they register the occasions when the Self has given itself utterly for the sake of the Whole.

Only the sentimentally pious regard



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the sufferings of Jesus with pity. Silence, awe, reverence, humility—but never pity in the presence of so austere, majestic, sublime an agony! Our pity is but the expression of our own cowardice in the presence of pain. We of to-day have lived long enough to see something of the greatness of that which came into the world through Jesus. No such thing as his profoundly spiritual conception of life, could be delivered from the heart and mind of a human being, without a pain of which only the mothers of the world know the depth. No such thing as his wondrous Gospel, not yet understood, could arise in the circumstances of his life, without bruise and breakage, profound schism between him and the leaders of his day, the loosening of elemental human passions, issuing in damage to everything that could be broken and destroyed, including his own mortal body.



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"Here we see pain working in all the nakedness of its truth. The pain which Jesus bore and brought into the world was indicative of a disunity which was rotting society like a disease. That same pain fostered spiritual growth in him, 'for he was made perfect'—the word means that he came to his blossom—'through suffering'; thus pain mediated the last potential in him which (let it be always remembered) was a race-potential, as well as an individual-potential. It also fostered spiritual growth in the world, for in Christianity the Western World suffered a rebirth. Pain ever works so; Jesus was simply the most illustrious case which proves the law of pain."

The pictures of the Crucified Christ, which greet the eye everywhere in the great Art Galleries of the world, do not alone represent the sufferings of One; rather do they set forth in the suffer-





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ings of One, the symbol of the sufferings of all. For in the One, all the world's sufferers everywhere are seen compacted together and forming the central organ of the race-body—"O tender heart of our humanity!" All sufferers, everywhere taken together, are the "suffering servant" who is the Messiah of the world.

If we could but understand the great unseen fact, that all our sufferings of every kind are vicarious, even as was the suffering of Jesus; if we could perceive that every one who suffers, just because he is an essential part of the Whole, is actually suffering "for the sake" of the Whole; if all pain might be seen in its true light, as martyrdom; if the least and lowest in man's life might be interpreted by its highest and best; then, indeed, should we know ourselves as members together of the universal "brotherhood of sufferers," and



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we should confidently and joyously interpret our pain and the pain of all others, as the inevitable birth-pangs of the higher, holier humanity.

In his "Beyond Good and Evil," Nietzsche says: "You want if possible to do away with suffering. And we? It really seems that we would rather have it increased. The discipline of suffering, of great suffering, know ye not that it is only this discipline that has produced all the elevations of humanity hitherto? The tension of soul in misfortune which communicates to it its energy, its shuddering in view of rack and ruin, its inventiveness and bravery in steadfastly enduring, interpreting, and exploiting misfortune and whatever depth, mystery, disguise, spirit, artifice or greatness has been bestowed upon the soul, has it not been bestowed through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering?"



## “THE VALUE OF MORAL CONFLICT.”

“If I stoop  
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,  
It is but for a time; I press God’s lamp  
Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,  
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.”

*Browning’s “Paracelsus.”*



THE Moral Conflict, from which no life is exempt, constitutes a species of the human experience of pain. It consists of a wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but “with principalities and powers,” and so its function is, in general, that of pain. It has, however, a peculiar importance of its own and is worthy of special consideration, as one of the all-experiences working together for good. The moral



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conflict of life may be described as the two-fold struggle: (1) with temptation on the arena of the individual inner life, and (2) against evil in the wider fields of social progress. To all who are truly alive and sensitive to the upward moral urge, the experience is both a personal discipline, and also the storm and stress of social redemption.

We shall never get very far in our attempt to understand the presence of moral evil in human life until we can answer clearly two fundamental questions: (1) What is the "evil" against which we are striving? and (2) What is the end for which we strive?

What is the secret of that element of antagonism of which we are all conscious, and which we call moral evil? Primitive men believed in many gods, some good and some bad; and they easily explained the problem of evil by referring the bad things to the bad gods





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and the good things to the good gods. Zoroaster taught that there were two gods, the god of light and goodness and the god of darkness and of evil, and that these almost equally-matched gods were in age-long conflict; and that in this fact was to be found the explanation of all the sins and sorrows of earth. This conception was, of course, a sheer assumption. The Hebrews *assumed* that the world was created perfect. The story of the Fall of Man was not originally in the Hebrew history. It came into their life later; many of its features, including the idea of the Devil, were doubtless borrowed from Babylonian and Persian sources. The early prophets knew nothing about it; but it came at last to be a fundamental idea in Hebrew theology that God created the world perfect; and then an enemy, a malign power, the Devil, invaded this fair world and destroyed its



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innocence, and thus introduced into human life all conceivable evils.

Christianity adopted this belief of the Hebrews, accepting their assumption, and made it one of the foundation stones of all its theologies. Why was it thus assumed? There is no proof available anywhere that any such thing ever took place; indeed, there is to-day demonstrable proof to the contrary. They assumed this dualistic, God-and-Devil theory, because it was the easiest way of explaining the element of antagonism in human life.

With our knowledge to-day, however, there is only one working philosophical explanation of the phenomena called evil; and only from this one viewpoint can any man logically or hopefully struggle against it, either in his own life or the life of society. When once we have grasped the universality and immanency of God; when we can say with



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Paul, "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things"; when we have recognized with Jacob Boehme, the father of German philosophy, that any definition short of "God in all, and all in God," virtually annihilates the conception of God, then we may take leave forever of that childish materialism which, down through the ages, has referred good and evil to different elemental, creative sources; then at last, we recognize the logical impossibility of any essence, person, matter, spirit, or principle existing in antagonism to the resistless omnipotence of God, for even the fraction of a second, without the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God.

We are forced to realize, without the shadow of mental reservation, that in all the apparent contradictions and strange paradoxes of life, there is only one principle at work, only one love ac-



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tuating, only one purpose evolving, only one ultimate end possible; for what was involved in the beginning, must surely one day be evolved in its fulness. We have already seen, in the last chapter, that contradiction or contrast is the fundamental condition of all life—physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Just as there could be no pleasure without its background of pain, so there cannot be good without an opposite, whereby to recognize it. The true life of Divine Sonship can only emerge out of deep contrasts; in a sinless, painless world, the moral element would be wholly lacking; for want of the contrast goodness, in such a world, would have no significance whatever in the conscious life of man.

There are only two possible places where there could be, of necessity, no problem of evil, viz., in the traditional Garden of Eden and in the traditional





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Hell. In the first place, there could be no good, because there was no evil; and in the second, there could be no evil, because there was no good. Whatever Adam may have been, he was not a moral character. He may have been innocent, but he could not have been virtuous; he may have been sinless, but then he knew nothing about goodness. Character only makes its appearance when an alternative is presented between higher and lower. Virtue must be attained in the struggle between possible alternatives. Goodness is an achievement out of possible choices of Good and Evil. And even though, under the test of this alternative between higher and lower, man failed, the verdict of his Creator was, "He has now become as one of us"; i. e., the Divine is at last awakened within him, because he knows good and evil and perceives the difference between them.



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But it is not only our deeper philosophical reasoning that forces us to discard the old superstition of dualism; the great spiritual seers of nearly all religions have recognized the necessity for the absolute unity of the principle underlying all that is. For example, in the 45th chapter of Isaiah we read the majestic declaration, "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." And again in his Epistle to the Romans, Paul boldly says that "the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but *by reason of Him*," that is, God. Now, in interpreting these passages in the light of our most modern philosophical and scientific conceptions of unity, we realize the difference between the attitude of profoundest optimism for oneself and humanity, and that of depressing, per-



plexed discouragement, which is the inevitable result of the "two-principles" delusion.

In what sense can the universal, self-originating Being say, "I create evil"? In the sense that the conscious stirrings of His in-dwelling life creates a standard which causes certain actions to be regarded as evil by contrast with the standard, which were not felt to be evil before the standard was given. Throughout the slow-moving, age-long process of evolution, there could be no evil until the Divine nature emerged in man to such a degree that it created a standard of judgment.

Monsters who tore each other in their slime; tigers, apes or ape-like men, who killed or stole or ravished, were not only not sinning, but growing in strength and beauty by struggle, bloodshed, conquest, in obedience to the Divine nature-law of the survival of the



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fittest. Geological records prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that all the many things we deem evil existed long ages before the time of which it is written, "God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good." The blood-stained law of the survival of the fittest was included in the benediction, "very good."

But there came a time in the evolutionary process when the Divine Immanence, slowly coming to consciousness in all creation, began to stir; and gradually, to those beings in whom it stirred, killing became murder, promiscuity in sexual relations became adultery, taking a neighbor's property became stealing. The old tradition said that evil came into the world at just that time; but evil, in one sense, had always been in the world. Envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, assault, murder, warfare—all of these things that we





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have come to think of as moral evils were in existence from the beginning; but they were not evil; there was no sin, no sense of guilt. Why? Because there was no such thing as conscience; there was no recognition of any distinction between higher and lower, right and wrong, better and worse. The evolution of what we call conscience, the emerging of a new standard of judgment, is only the evolving in man of what was first involved; it is the presence of the Divine in man, gradually awakening to consciousness, that made these actions evil which before were innocent; if it had not been for this higher or Diviner life, implicit in man and but slowly becoming explicit, no standard of judgment could ever have emerged, no evil would ever have been recognized as such.

So it is that the Infinite Being may be regarded as saying: "I create evil.



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When I am stirring in man, things become evil which were not evil before." It is as if the sun should say: "I create shadows. There were no shadows till I arose—all was dark together; but now I have arisen and shadows *are* because of *me*."

Evil is never in the thing itself, as we shall see later, but rather, in unregulated desire. Previous to the existence of the regulation, no desire could be evil. "I had not known sin," says Paul, "but for the law." It is the stirring of the Divine within that initiates the regulation, establishes the law, writing it on the heart; therefore, the Divine within alone makes evil possible; and the possibility of evil, i. e., the capacity to violate the regulation, to choose the lower rather than the higher, can alone cause the Divine within to be recognized as such, to be voluntarily chosen and obeyed.



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Now, if this be true, one conclusion is clear: all the moral conflicts of life become more real; they are taken out of the realm of the allegorical into that of the intensely practical; we are no longer contending against a well-nigh all-powerful Devil and his minions, but rather choosing between the higher and lower impulses in our own complex natures. It is the evolving Divine nature within me, convincing me of the wrongness of certain actions, which, without the Divine nature, would not be wrong. And the one test of the growth of the Divine Sonship, or true Self within me, will be an instinctive and increasing desire to enlist all of my higher faculties against the contrast—the resisting impulses I perceive within me.

If we were to ask the average person: What is the actual end for which we strive morally? he would doubtless say that moral striving, so far as indi-



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vidual life is concerned, looks toward the fashioning of perfect moral beings; and so far as society is concerned, the building up of a perfect state, a final and permanent kingdom of heaven upon earth. Whether this ideal be the true one or not, depends entirely upon our conception of "perfection."

The word "perfect" carries several different meanings. The idea of perfection when applied to a jewel has a different content than when applied to a flower. The method of attaining perfection in a jewel is mechanical and artificial, in the flower it is vital and natural; the one comes by pressure and friction from without, the other in loyal response to an urge from within. Moral perfection, as commonly understood by most people, approximates more to the former than the latter. The idea of a moral being who had attained to a complete perfection through conform-





ance to some external standard, reveals the fact that we all tend to express even spiritual movement in terms of time and space. "The true line of progress is vertical not horizontal; it is the gradual disclosure of what is deeper within, not the slow attainment of that which is farther on."

It is indeed conceivable that in the course of time, perfectly finished and complete moral beings, in a society of the same "perfect" type, should come into existence on the earth; but that could only be when the main life-stream had receded from those places and was moving forward elsewhere. For Life, so far as we are able to understand it, is not at all concerned about producing perfectly finished beings or things. A perfected thing, in the sense that it is complete, with no more inner possibilities to be realized, is a thing which Life has finished with. A perfect organiza-



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tion only exists when the primal life forces have subsided; and a waning and slowly stagnating energy has nothing left to do but to weave its shroud. This is literally true, whether it be a political or a religious institution. A perfection that means a mechanical conformance to some outside standard, a finished completion, is only another word for death—the only fatal death. So that it is to the perfection of the flower that we must look for light.

One of the profoundest and subtlest words ever spoken concerning perfection, is the saying of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." How can this be? Is such perfection possible, or are the words merest mockery? As a matter of fact, it is the only perfection which *is* possible. Ordinarily, we use the word "perfection" in the sense of strict conformity to standard. We



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speak of a perfect copy, or a perfect specimen; in the sense also of fitness to purpose, we praise a perfect fit, or a perfect instrument. In neither of these senses, however, is the idea of perfection applicable to God who, as the Infinite Being, can have no external standard to conform to; and as the great "I am," the "Beginning and the End," has no external purpose to serve. The perfection of God can only be defined in terms of pure spontaneity, directness, i. e., in self-expression; with Him, impulse, life, law, are all one thing. He is, in all His acts, from the heart, Himself. All creation is His spontaneous, unmotivated self-outpouring.

This is the only perfection we have the right to set before ourselves as the end of life—the perfection of God. We must not seek it as the result of the process of being moulded, whether by force or consent, into conformity with



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some external standard of virtue; we should rather seek, with increasing surety and strength, the ability to live out our true inner lives, finely, freely, fully, from the heart, making them loyally and without shame as complete an expression as possible of what we really are, in our deeper, diviner Selves.

“The perfect life is the life lived from the heart; it is the free life, the creative life. The attainment of perfection is, like the attainment of freedom, the disclosure of the more inward life-centre, its establishment, the gathering and knitting together of the personality there; so that the Self may be expressed therefrom, not loosely or spasmodically, or with mere impulse of bravado and defiance, but with fine temper, constancy, holiness, Self-love and measureless trust.”

If this, then, is the meaning of that perfection for which we strive, the prac-





tice of the virtues is not an end, but the means to an end, viz., constantly fuller and richer Self-expression; and the discipline and labor of moral effort, like pain, looks toward the growth and liberation of the true Self. Thus we begin to see that there is something other than moral perfection at issue. The moral life is not the highest life. There is a beyond-morality. There is a deeper than the moral consciousness, toward which all moral conflict leads, viz., the bringing of the spiritual Self into consciousness. "Just as the ultimate end of the struggle for existence in the sub-human kingdom is not the creation of perfect animals but the birth of a higher order of creature, so the ultimate issue of the moral struggle is not realized on the moral plane. Moral pains are the birth-pangs of another and deeper form of consciousness than the merely moral. Morality is the mid-



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wife; its end is that the Son of God may be delivered in us. "What we gain in the moral conflict, is our Selves at a higher stage of consciousness."

When Paul said "The law is a school-master to bring us to Christ," he was not referring to the historical Jesus Christ, but rather to the potential Christ, the true divine Self that dwells in every individual; and that emerges into consciousness through the struggles of our moral natures. We are not to aim, therefore, at becoming perfect (finished) moral beings, but we are to enter heartily and hopefully into the moral conflict, expecting confidently our arrival at length at a point, as it were, of higher personal standing, from which "everything shall be perfect to us."

No one questions the necessity for an external standard of morality, prescribed in laws and customs, whereby



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society seeks to protect itself against the impulsiveness of the individual; but every thoughtful man realizes that mere conformance to the laws or conventional morality of the community can never make of the individual a truly moral being. How much of our "goodness" is due to the custom-morality of the community in which we live, and how much to the spontaneous welling-forth of what is in our deepest being, is a question each one must answer for himself. Our laws and customs are only rough and very imperfect approximations of what every man knows to be right. How many forms of dishonesty there are that are not proscribed by law or custom; how many forms of taking life that do not appear on the statutes; how many expressions of impurity, not tabulated anywhere; and yet the inner Self of every one sees them as evil!

If, as the business man went forth to



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his work each day, his firm resolve in the conducting of his business was not merely to obey the letter of the law or keep within the limits laid down by custom in business, but rather to be loyal to the dictates of his deeper Self, there would soon be a higher standard of morality in business. If the woman, in all her social relationships, should resolve not merely to obey the canons of what was proper or right in her particular set, but rather to be true to her deepest Self, there would soon be a higher standard of morality in social life. Moral truth, as well as other truth, is "within ourselves," not outside. It is not because we do not know what is right within ourselves, but because our morality consists chiefly of conformance to conventional standards, that our progress in the moral life is so slow and halting. The history of the past reveals the progress that the world has





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made in morals since primitive times; but we forget that every step taken in advance has been due, at the outset, to some non-conformist, some brave man or woman who dared to defy conventional morality for the sake of being true and loyal not to any outside code or standard, but rather to the inmost Self of their beings. Thus it is that we can never become factors in the race-progress, until we dare to shift the moral centre of our lives from outer standards to the inner Self.

This is why, as commonly presented, the moral life is so mechanical and dreary and hopeless a thing. The process of becoming slowly better and better, or being more and more highly polished morally, is a wearisome and unromantic business at best. How often do we grow tired of "trying to be good"! How often do we feel as if all the swing and zest and vitality of life have been



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crowded out by the moral struggles! Or, just when we think the victory gained, we find ourselves the victims of sudden impulses and surgent feelings which sweep us off our feet, and then the whole effort has to be begun over again. To such discouraged souls, it comes as a real help to know that while moral effort is not to be avoided, its end is not moral perfection, the getting better and better according to some outer standard. The moral plane must be lived through, but it must ultimately be transcended. The great end is to be reached, not by "trying to be good," but by realizing the true divine Self, and living one's life gladly, freely, confidently from that inner centre.

The problem of good and evil arises in human life only because human life is, as yet, in the making, and thus must share in the imperfections consequent to its stage of development. But are



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the imperfections of life fixed and immutable? Are they part of its essential nature? Is life like a woven fabric in which there are white strands (good), and black strands (evil), which we have only to sort out and properly label? The evolutionary hypothesis strikes a mortal blow at the idea of a radical dualism between good and evil. Whatever good and evil may be, it is no longer possible to regard them as two, eternally contrary principles, dividing the world between them.

A thing is good or bad, only in relation to you, and to you as an individual who is constantly growing and changing. The determining factor, then, is not something inherent in the things themselves, but something in you who enter into relations with the things. Things are not good or evil in themselves, but only in relation to your will. It is fundamentally a question of in-



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ward mastery. There is no real dualism, only a practical dualism on the moral plane.

"There is nothing that is evil except because a man has not mastery over it; and there is no good thing that is not evil if it have mastery over a man.

And there is no passion or power or pleasure or pain, or created thing whatsoever, which is not ultimately for man and for his use—or which he need be afraid of, or ashamed at.

But things cannot be divided into good and evil, but all are good so soon as they are brought into subjection."

In other words, there are just two possible ways in which human beings can do wrong. (1) By perverting faculties and powers, perfectly good in themselves, or (2) By carrying them to excess. In either case the solution of the problem lies in self-mastery. There are passions and energies, quick and potent in human nature, which, if they have the mastery, drag a man back into the animalism from which he is emerg-





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ing; which, if mastered and controlled, are like the fine-mettled steeds that bear the Chariot of life up to the heights. In the same way, a generous instinct, if it passes out of control, grows upon a man so that he becomes incapable of saying "No," or of making a sound judgment, and his whole character deteriorates. The importance of this principle cannot be over-estimated. If a man has control, all things are good; if he has not control, nothing is good. If he has the mastery, the world is full of friends; if he has not, it is crammed with foes. There is no thing or being, however high or authoritative, to which a man may surrender the throne of his will.

"To the man who has mastery, all things are given 'richly to enjoy.' Every natural energy and passion is his faithful servant and every experience is his good angel laden with gifts.



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To the man who has not mastery—  
Ah, how true it is!—even good things  
turn to evil; sympathy weakens him;  
help renders him less able to stand  
alone; gifts become snares and tempta-  
tions for him; opportunities, those an-  
gel-faced messengers of the forward,  
upward life, are to him mocking spirits,  
since he cannot seize them.”

Just here lies the crux of the whole  
moral problem. The ordinary man has  
not yet found his true Self, has not yet  
attained to complete mastery. He is  
not free; he is not master of his flesh-  
body, of all the passions and pain that  
come through it; nor of his mental-  
body, with all its fears, doubts, false  
ideas, prejudices, etc. He is not mas-  
ter of his Self, because he has not yet  
become his true Self; at best, he is striv-  
ing for it. He is subject to all man-  
ner of resistance and opposition, all  
kinds of temptations and allurements.



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To these apparently hostile forces we give the name "evil," for they seem to be the enemies of our life, seeking—and with some success—to dethrone and dispossess us at the centre. We struggle, resist, fight and would destroy our "adversary." What we do not always clearly see, is that this is precisely the way, and the only way, in which we can come to mastery and enthrone the true Self in our lives; so that the "adversary" is really the "Lover of our life" in disguise. The incessant demand upon us, in these moral conflicts of life, is for courage, faithfulness, hope and a certain abandon in the struggle. The end is sure, it may be nearer than we think; and also far greater than we have imagined. For in this struggle of every day the surface impediments of our life get brushed off; unreliable weapons are tested and discarded; deeper and deeper latencies within us unfold; fresh



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experiences, bringing pain, bring us fresh knowledge; and as they uncover deeper areas of consciousness, bring us ever nearer to the true Self, whose discovery is the goal of all our struggles.

“Lover indeed is he who deals not tenderly with us, giving us an arm to lean upon, but roughly with us, that we may develop that inward core of free personal will and self-reliance which is the pillar of manhood. Good indeed is that apparent evil which challenges and resists us and so makes explicit the power and glory that are implicit in us. Evil is the way in which a higher good first manifests itself. That which we can see to be good, we are on a level with; that which seems evil, conceals a good at a higher level. Evil is not the denial of good; nor is it the shadow where the good should be; it is the indication of the presence of a good which cannot be ours, until we have





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won the mastery over it. Evil is the fearsome, flame-armed Cherubim who stands betwixt us and the Tree of Life. It is the thrusting challenge of a good which invites, taunts, dares us up to possess it."



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"O Love greater than all,  
Over the mountains, the forests and the seas,  
Over the black chasm of death, in spectral haste  
Thou ridest, and the hungry winds and waves  
Are but thy hounds; Thou, the eternal huntsman!

*Edward Carpenter.*

N selecting Love as one of the three great typical experiences of every life, we do not intend to suggest that Love is simply coördinate with Pain and Moral Conflict, as the givers of freedom, the liberators of the Spirit in man. Love does perform this function, but with a profound difference. Pain and Moral struggle help to open up the inner recesses of personality in order that *something other* than them-



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selves may emerge into consciousness and abide there permanently; whereas Love knocks at the door or storms the heart, in order that *itself* may enter. Pain and moral effort are the means to a larger end. Love is both means *and* end. They are saviours; Love is both saviour and salvation, both king and kingdom. The end toward which Love leads, as means, is always more Love—a richer, deeper, diviner Love.

It is through no chance that all the great religions of the world, with singular unanimity, give to Love so important a place in their teachings, even though the followers of these religions have failed, for the most part, to incarnate Love in their lives. It was no arbitrary choice that led Jesus to affirm that all the former teachings of law and prophets are fulfilled in the two-fold law of Love to God and Love to man; or to say "A new commandment give I



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unto you, that ye love one another." It was not chance that led Paul, as his own inner life unfolded, to reach that stage of development where he forgot, apparently, the intellectual side of religion for which he had so vigorously contended, so that he could declare that "Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away—and now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love." Neither was it accident that led the inspired Seer of Patmos to write "Every one that loveth, is born of God and knoweth God; for God is Love."

Why has Love been the one absorbing theme of poet and novelist? Why has it been sung and praised as has no other experience in all the range of human life? Why is all history inter-





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woven with the story of Love's triumphs and also of Love's defeats? Why is all of life, from the cradle to the grave, fairly saturated with Love's glory, or else darkened with the wretchedness, the sordidness, the dreary emptiness that results from Love's absence? To answer these questions truly would be to know the deepest secret of Life.

It is not because Love is a beautiful sentiment, or one of life's deepest emotions; it is not because it is one of the great virtues, or even the supreme virtue; it is not because it is one of the "fruits of the spirit," or the highest ideal of religion. Love has been awarded the foremost place by prophet and poet, by sage and seer, by all the great saviours of the race, simply because all forms of Love, from lowest to highest, are forms of the cosmic consciousness; in other words, they all con-



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stitute, in some degree, the consciousness of Reality.

While the majority have always interpreted the immortal phrase, "God is love," as if it meant, "God loves," or "love is one of the attributes of the Divine nature," and have often limited its blessings to certain people, or even imagined that it could be superseded by other and contrary emotions in the Divine heart, the truly enlightened ones have always accepted the words literally, as if they formed an equation or identity. To all such, the final word (if any such can ever be uttered) both of religion and of life is the word, "*God is love.*" So that when we say: God is the Great Reality, Primal Being, the Original Source of all that is, the Infinite Life pervading all things, we can also say just as truly: Love is the Great Reality, Primal Being, the Original Source, the Infinite Life of the Uni-



verse; for God is Love and Love is God.

The biologist traces the chemical processes of life, step by step, back to what he calls the "mystery of life," which the scalpel and the laboratory have not yet been able to disclose; but the "mystery of life" is nothing else than the mystery of love, which has been in the world in some form as long as life itself; nay, more, which is actually one with life—the very essence of life.

The "Force" to which Science leads us back as the ultimate power in the universe from which all proceeds, is nothing less than the force of Love. As such, it reveals its cosmic nature, it passes beyond the limited plane of human relations and takes its place in the procession of the stars. All the forces of nature are but the transmutations of a single energy, and that energy is the



infinite self-giving of Original Being. So love is but the transmutation, in human and vital experience, of gravitation and attraction in the material world.

“For not other in principle, than the Love that sways a Mother’s heart for her dearest offspring, is the power the sun displays toward the brood of golden spheres that leapt from his burning breast. By this power were cosmic atoms mated in primeval nuptials. By this power were worlds begotten, as from chaos sprang the myriad phases of creation. It fused the primal gases and condensed them into physical forms. It palpitated through the universal ether, and from infinite vibrations formed all substances. It grasped and cooled the incandescent globes, and cooled and moulded them into final shape. It begot and mated metals in the bowels of the earth. It warmed the bosom of the planet, palpitant with life, and nursed





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the feeble forms that moved upon its surface. It peopled the globe with countless crawling things, and creatures that walk and fly, and the air with microscopic dots of life. It painted the male bird's gorgeous plumage, and throbbed its slender throat with passionate song. It carved the cave and built the nest and hive; it reared the home, and all the complex structure of society. Love is the ultimate and perennial power from which all others spring. All other forces are ephemeral; love alone is final and eternal." Love *is* life, and life *is* God, and God *is* love; and thus the circle is complete.

To all who have grasped this identity of life and love, the experience of love becomes the experience of God. To love is to be conscious of Reality. Love is the universal, realized in the particular. Love is the real and only Presence. Love is All. In its human expressions,



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love is not so much one passion among others; it is the immortal aspect of a man emerging from his hidden depths into consciousness. When a man loves, and only then, he is living his life on the universal and eternal plane; and in just the degree that he truly surrenders himself to love's power, in just that degree is he living out his true and divine Self; for the deepest essence of that true Self is love. The love-life is eternal life, for it is God's life. He who loves, knows himself as one with God in that experience. Love is God, coming to consciousness in man. In loving, man becomes most truly God.

Even the lower forms of love contain something of the Divine. In "La Samaritaine," Edmond Rostand, with an insight that reveals true genius, describes the conversation of Jesus with the outcast woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. Finally, as she listens to his



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simple, yet wondrous, statements about God, she becomes convinced that he is the Christ, and throws herself impulsively at his feet, breaking out again in the voluptuous song she had previously been singing. It is the only song of love she knows. Then, realizing that this is sacrilege, she cries out her apologies in shame. But Jesus gently assists her to arise, reassuring her that "He is always, to some degree, in all words of love," and that the hearts of men are indeed prepared for that higher love by their earthly loves.

"Human love is always sweetest

When it leadeth toward a more divine and perfect  
love."

But all forms of love, even the lowest, contain at their heart the true love that one day must be clearly revealed.

From time immemorial, both the sage and the poet have employed the figure



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of the Tree of Life. Of that Tree, love is the sap which contains the creative principle within itself. The sap fashions the tree as its protecting body. It causes stem, branch, twig, leaf, flower, fruit, to appear in due order. The tree-form has separate parts, but the sap is continuous within. The outward tree is subject to constant changes; the leaf fades, the branch withers, the fruit falls to the ground; but to these changes the sap is not subject. As Shelley sang:

"Fate — Time — Occasion — Chance and Change — to  
these

All things are subject—but Eternal Love."

The sap has its own motion, that ceaseless ebb and flow, constriction and expansion, inhalation and exhalation—a rhythmic movement which appears to be the deepest characteristic of life; but it is immune from seasonal changes and





has inherent power to create a succession of new forms, as if it were part of an exhaustless energy.

If we can imagine the tree endowed with consciousness in all its parts, it is clear that there would be a different quality of consciousness in the leaf or branch from that in the sap. The leaves would be self-conscious in their separation from each other; but not so with the sap, since it is not divided in itself but is continuous throughout the Whole. By virtue of this self-consciousness, a leaf could say, "I am here and not there"; all that the sap could say would be, "I am." "Here" and "there" have no significance for it.

Because it is everywhere, it is not conscious of being anywhere in particular. The leaf can say, "I was not and soon I shall not be"; but all that the sap can say is, "I am." The leaf has no present; it has only a past and a future.



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The sap, on the other hand, has neither a fading past nor a dawning future, but only a present; its consciousness is of an enduring Now.

What the sap is to the tree, that love is to human life. The love-consciousness is the "I am" consciousness. Love is the self-existent life in man. It is a kind of cosmic egoism. We catch hints of this truth when, in moments of love-rapture, whether for a person or a cause, we lose all consciousness of locality or of boundaries. We are not conscious in such moments of here and there; we just *are*. It is not due to emptiness but to fulness. We are conscious of being neither here nor there, not because we are nowhere, but because we are everywhere, and all the star-peopled spaces seem to be within us. We say that we are "carried out of ourselves"; it would be more accurate to say that in such moments there



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is nothing that is outside of us, that we are carried deeper into our true or cosmic Selves; for all barriers and boundaries have been removed and we know ourselves as one with All.

In the same sense, love is the Now-consciousness. "Love strikes one hour," says Mrs. Browning, "and that hour is now." When we reflect upon our love, we may speak of its past and of its future; but in the experience itself, in the moment of love-rapture, there is neither a past that is receding from us, nor a future which is approaching; the moment itself is all; but the moment is eternity. Viewed from without, love may be regarded as being in time; but experienced from within, it is timeless. It is the "I am" which cannot say, "I was" or, "I shall be." It says with God, "Before the world was, I am; and when Time shall be no more,



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I am." Love is not only immortal; love *is* immortality.

These suggestions which are furnished to every one in the love-experience, where space and time are practically annihilated and one breathes the atmosphere of the infinite and universal cosmic plane, will help us to realize more clearly that love is one of the primal qualities of Being, as primal as life or mind or will. According to the Upanishads, "From love the world is born, by love it is sustained, toward love it moves, and into love it enters."

Love, then, is the deepest essence and the ultimate meaning of everything. It is not a part of life, it is the only real life. It is not a mere sentiment, it is truth. It is not the source of joy, it is the only true joy. It is not something in consciousness, it is the perfection of consciousness. Love is the white light





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of pure consciousness that emanates in us from God.

"The night has a thousand eyes  
The day but one,  
Yet the light of the bright world dies  
With the setting sun.  
The mind has a thousand eyes  
The heart but one,  
Yet the light of the whole life dies  
When Love is done."

Changing "eyes" to "I's," we see the deeper meaning of the poet. The mind has a thousand "I's," the heart but one. The true "I" or "ego" or "Self" is the focal point, the "heart," the real centre, the Divine in us. Regardless of what happens to the "I's" of the mind (or intellectual life) it is profoundly true that "the light of the whole life dies, when Love (the true "I") is done." The *whole* life, mark you! The life of the divided self is split, "unwhole"; and so long as the



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Light of Love is shut out, the intellect of the man is left in obscurity.

If this be the deeper meaning and reality of Love from the philosophical view-point, coming down from these heights to the highways and byways of ordinary human experience, we find nothing therein so solemn, sacred, pure, holy, joyous or vital as Love; nothing so worthy of our most lucid thought, our frankest utterance, our most earnest championship, our most abandoned surrender, our most devoted service; for "every one that loveth knoweth" Life, Reality, God.

When we examine more closely some of the deep revelations that come through the love-experiences of human life, we realize that Love is indeed the mightiest power knocking at the door of the inner life, in order that the true Self may come forth in all its divine glory.



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Love is the Great Appeal. Nothing stirs until it is summoned. Potentialities slumber everywhere and in every one, awaiting the knock on the door that shall bid them spring to life, stand erect and go forth to the work of the day. History is but the record of the slow awakening of the body, mind and heart of the race at the call of the materials and powers, the beauty and order, the passion and devotion of nature and of life. Civilization is only the product of a multitude of responses that man has made to the appeal of the world outside, and the world within; and his character has been strengthened or weakened by the nature of the responses he has made to those appeals.

In those ages when the wonder and mystery of life wrapped man around, he gave his heart to Religion and peopled the woods and fields and sky with divinities; and a little later built his



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shrines, his temples and cathedrals in which to house his thought of God. In those ages in which Beauty walked hand in hand with man and made her home under his roof in a closeness of fellowship that seems incredible in this modern age, he carved and painted and built and sang, as if the creative spirit in him were dominated by Beauty alone. And in those later ages when the processes of nature bared themselves to his gaze and the forces of nature offered themselves for his service, he became the Scientist, and annihilated time and space and made himself the master magician of modern times.

But in all the long years of his unfolding, and amid the multitude of voices that have called him to thought and feeling and action, no voice has ever had such potency as the voice of love; nor has any other appeal sounded in his soul so all-compelling a note. He





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has been called to worship, to voice the language of beauty, to philosophize on life's mysteries, to investigate life's hidden secrets; but the one voice in all these activities that has pierced his soul, and made him the master artist, scientist, philosopher or seeker after God, has ever been the voice of the master-passion of life.

“For Love is the creative force in life, summoning the soul into earthly being from one knows not what incalculable distance of space; cherishing it while it neither understands itself nor the body which houses it; surrounding it with all manner of influences which appeal to the highest in it; evoking its latent nobleness; teaching it the great lessons of life, the wisdom to know to what voices to respond and to what to turn a deaf ear.”

For love's sake men and women have made every sacrifice, have bartered



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name and place, have surrendered wealth and reputation, have endured every disgrace and shame, have suffered every privation and ignominy, have climbed to wondrous heights, and been dragged to lowest depths, and in the triumph of complete self-effacement have willingly and even joyously laid down their very lives for the Beloved. Does not a power, possessing so wondrous an appeal—the greatest Life has ever known—in whose presence no sacrifice is too great or too small, carry in itself the suggestion of the free out-pouring of the Divine Being of which every life is a part?

Love is also True Insight. Among the ancient maxims whose roots lie in confusion of thought, none is more misleading than the well-worn aphorism that love is blind. If love were blind, life would soon sink into chaos; for love is the force that creates, the power that



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sustains, the principle that governs; for God is love. It is the love of his art that draws the painter, the poet, the musician into the very heart of his art, and makes his passion one with insight; so that he sees and hears, where the rest of us are only blind and deaf. It is love for truth that leads the prophet to utter his message, unweariedly, in the face of hostile opposition or blank indifference; but only a later age recognizes the truth and knows the prophet as such. It is love for righteousness that leads the reformer to hurl himself against the deep-seated, traditional conventions of society; but only subsequent generations rise up to call him "blessed." To him only who loves with an all-consuming passion is the final veil lifted and the ultimate insight given; for at the heart of things, knowledge and love are one.

Love is never blind. Passion is blind; those who love are often blind. Love



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may not open new senses or bestow new faculties; but it certainly vivifies, clarifies, intensifies the senses and faculties which already exist; and still more, it burns through the barriers which self-consciousness has erected between one's self and others, so that one perceives things as they really are. The mother who sees no fault in her child, is blinded not by love but by dulness of perception; the wife who finds no defect in her husband, may make him comfortable, but she can never make him great; the friend who finds only content in his friendship, is forever denied the highest service of friendship; for as Emerson says, "our friends are those who make us do what we can."

Absence of love always registers a degree of callousness, of aloofness, of separateness, of blindness. Love makes the eyes telescopic, and microscopic as well. We do not love because we do





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not comprehend; or rather, we do not comprehend because we do not love. To love is to discern, to understand, to interpret, to possess insight; and thus to *know* is to be like God—"Every one that loveth, knoweth God."

Love is Spontaneous. The very soul of love is spontaneity; it is always and everywhere the overflowing of the heart, the sweep of the deeper currents in a tide that moves under a compulsion as binding as that which bids the sea leave its inlets and coves for a season and then sends it thundering back. Calculation, prudence, economy of sacrifice, taking account of cost, are as far removed from love as is policy from honor; they have nothing in common. Love has no system of measurement, and no yardstick for the little more or the little less. Love flies out of the window when mathematics comes in at the door.



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Love must be spontaneous, irrepressible, overflowing, and loses instantly the extraordinary essence that makes it truly love, when it weighs and measures and inspects too closely the quality of its return. It is in the fact that love is its own sufficiency, its own joy, its own compensation for every sacrifice and all pain, that we see it to be Divine.

Love is always the Great Forgetting. Love has sometimes been described as the most exacting form of egotism. This is true of love's counterfeits. It is often true of the earliest beginnings of love—the first stages through which it passes on to its higher reaches, its diviner vision; for all real love so blends the passion of the senses with the passion of the spirit that the one is sublimated, and the other, given body, substance, reality. But however keen may be the sense of self in the ear-



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lier period, the time comes when the true lover begins to forget himself, and in that moment love begins to possess him in its fulness.

The story of the Great Passions is the story of those who have forgotten themselves and become absorbed in others, not to the extinction but to the fulfillment of the Self. Love only exists in offering its best; love is the insatiable desire to go outward, to pour forth, to express, to do, to give, to contribute. When love's perfect harmony is evoked, "the chord of self" passes out of sight. When the man rises to heroic heights of passion and devotion, he always leaves *himself* behind as he climbs to the summit. For all those who love, as the martyrs, heroes and great spirits have loved truth or country or wife or child, has been appointed that road of forgetfulness which ends in the most absorbing remembrance. A thousand



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times the lover must forget, in order that his whole being may go into one great act of remembrance.

But this forgetfulness is not the obliteration of Self of which some Eastern mystics have dreamed; it is rather the true fulfillment, the actual finding of the Self, which is the crowning affirmation of life. "Let desire die, that the soul may escape pain, weariness and disillusion," takes on, in the experience of love, a diviner form: "Let desire fulfill itself that the soul may enter into the fulness of life, without evading it." Not by denial, but by surrender to the master passion, is attained that insight which is so much more a matter of vital experience than of knowledge. "Blessed are they that lose themselves in possessing another, for they alone hold the cup of happiness to their lips."

Thus we see that love, to be love,





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must feel itself infinite, or as nearly infinite as anything human can be. When one cannot give himself utterly in love, when one pauses to reflect how far he may go in loving, or reaches a point beyond which he sees he cannot go any farther, then he does not truly love. This leads us to the deepest secret of love.

In its profoundest aspect, Love is Union. The fundamental aim of love is non-differentiation—absolute union of being. Sex is the allegory of love in the physical world, and the aim of sex is always union—but on the physical plane. But what is the meaning that is contained in love's effort toward union from lowest to highest planes? To quote from Mr. H. G. Wells: "I think that the desire to partake, the desire to merge one's individual identity with another's, remains a necessary element in all personal love. It is a way out of



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ourselves, a breaking down of our individual separation, just as hatred is an intensification of that. We cast aside our reserves, our seceracies, our defenses, we open ourselves; touches that would be intolerable from common people become a mystery of delight; acts of self-abasement and self-sacrifice are charged with symbolical pleasure. We cannot tell which of us is me, which you. Our imprisoned egoism looks out through this window, forgets its walls, and is for those brief moments released and universal."

In Victor Rydberg's exquisite little poem, "The Kiss," he describes how the gentle pressure of the loved one's lips awakens the imprisoned soul to a keener realization of its cage, and inspires it with longing to break the bars and swing itself free into the world of light, where a perfect spiritual union is possible. And Tagore expresses the



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same feeling in the words, "Love, my heart yearns day and night for the meeting of you. . . . Alas, for my vain desire! Where is this hope for union, except in thee, my God!"

It is here, indeed, that love's real power is found. In response to love's knockings, the true Self is awakened, it looks forth from its prison house of self-consciousness, it "forgets its walls" that have separated, it bursts through all barriers that have divided, it finds its Self at last in the union with the All-life. This is why love is the greatest thing in the world. This is the wonderful and revealing part that love is designed to play in life, if we could but understand aright its meaning.

As Swami Vivekananda has said: "Hatred proceeds from imperfect knowledge, which makes us perceive objects as *separate* from one another. But when we see our true Self *in* oth-



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ers, how can we hate another without hating our Self? It would be impossible for Self to hate Self. Where Self-knowledge is, there can remain no feeling of hatred. He who realizes all beings in the Self never hates anything or any being. When hatred is gone, jealousy and all selfish feelings which we call wicked disappear. What remains? The ordinary love which stands in opposition to hatred vanishes, but divine love begins to reign in the heart of the seer. *True love means the expression of Oneness.* If we see our true Self in others, we cannot help loving them as we love our Self. Now, we understand the meaning of 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

The oldest philosophy of man has always taught this truth. When all beings appear as parts of one Universal Self, there is no longer delusion, or fear or sorrow. Sorrow and fear arise so





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long as there is the sense of duality and separateness. In absolute oneness, however, there cannot remain fear, sorrow, suffering, separation or self-delusion. This is the result of true Self-knowledge. "Know thyself," and the surface self vanishes and all selfishness is destroyed. The deeper Self emerges and all unselfishness is attained. Herein lies both the ideal and also the explanation of morality. Jesus says "Love your neighbor as yourself"; and the reason for this supreme injunction is because "your neighbor *is* your Self." "He who sees every one in himself, and himself in every one, thus seeing the same God living in all in the same manner, he no more kills the Self by the Self. And he realizes at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that love, lover and beloved are one. For him illusion disappears and all suffering is gone."



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"The Traveller and the road seem one,  
With the errand to be done,  
For love, lover and beloved are One."

Every love of our lives, whether it be love of persons, or of Truth, or of Righteousness, or of God, is the true Saviour sent to lead us out of the narrow kingdom of self into the universal kingdom of love. God is love. To love God, then, is to love Love with a mighty, all-consuming passion. Love is all, is life, is God. No man has ever had imagination enough to exaggerate the greatness of love. No one has ever yet begun to exhaust his powers of loving; no one has ever yet dreamed how great his love might become. Man has never yet dared to love his brother or his sister half enough. It is for this reason that the world still lives its life and all civilization still proceeds upon the self-conscious plane.



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"Children of Earth! Ye suffering ones! O! cease  
Your fruitless strife with God's most holy law.  
Love-life is perfect; nor can any flaw  
Be found in Love's decree. Give Love to all  
As to thyself; this mandate magical,  
A rich rose-garden of the desert makes,  
Turns hopeless sorrow into joy, and shakes  
The rule of anger and the reign of lust  
Whose due is death, whose satisfaction dust,  
Makes light of dark, exterminates pale woe."



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"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."

*Jesus.*



ONE of the greatest words in the human vocabulary is the word Freedom. It belongs with those other two great words, Life and Love; and as we have seen that Life in its deepest essence *is* Love—the incessant out-pouring of Infinite Being—so Freedom is not to be regarded as something separate from or added on to Life; it is rather of the essential nature of that Life which *is* Love. A life that does not know freedom is no life; and love, to be love at all, must be free and spontaneous. So





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that Life, Love and Freedom are forever one and inseparable.

The great prophets of the race have always been the prophets of a larger liberty; and the great saviours of mankind have ever led the way toward a deeper, truer freedom. This instinctive desire for freedom is the chief determining force in human history, and the inner meaning of all human striving. It is the secret which lies within and behind all world-political movements, whether it be the nationalistic tendencies in the smaller, weaker, so-called inferior races, or the aggressive, expansive policies of the more dominant nations.

The true significance of nationalism is the instinct for self-expression. The tenacity, stubbornness and seeming unquenchableness of the spirit of nationalism is not to be interpreted alone in terms of vulgar pride or an exaggerated



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sense of self-importance; but rather in terms of the indomitable urgency of a fundamental race-fact—the source and end of each and every race—original, peculiar, necessary, whose fullest expression is required for the perfection of humanity as a whole. In similar terms must we interpret the policies of aggression, conquest, imperialism, which characterize the movements of the greater nations in the world. On the surface there is greed and lust for empire, or the fascination of political intrigue, or the economic demand for an outlet for population; but deep within all such movements is the instinct for self-expression, the striving for a larger freedom. And this instinct for freedom is eternally right; it is the imperfect understanding of what really constitutes freedom, and the barbarous methods employed in attaining freedom



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that have caused so much of the wrong and injustice in the life of nations.

The same conditions apply to the life of every community, regarded from within. Generation after generation, with alternating fortunes but with no real intermission, the ceaseless struggle goes on between the Established Order and Progress, Tradition and Heresy, Old Theology and New Theology, Ascendancy with Subjection, Aristocracy with the Masses, Capitalism with Labour, Individualism with Socialism, Things-as-they-are with Things-as-they-are-to-be. This incessant conflict in the life of the community is not to be interpreted merely, as the superficial observer might imagine, as the arrogance of the strong and the discontent of the weak, the selfishness of the possessor and the revengeful spirit of the dispossessed, the mere brute struggle of Those-Who-Have to retain and of



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Those-Who-Have-Not to obtain; it is an inward ferment which manifests itself outwardly in these various surface-oppositions. These external antagonisms are like those of lovers, the signs of a subtle, inward coöperation; while inevitable as a stage in progress they, nevertheless, prepare the way for a better mutual understanding and a higher unity. The true secret of the ferment is the gradual arrival from within of a profounder community-consciousness. The community as a whole is coming to itself through the strife of its members. It is a potential Freedom becoming actualized through struggle.

In this modern age, where the storm and stress in the antagonisms of community-life is so clearly marked, there has, nevertheless, been emerging as never before, the consciousness of the solidarity of the community, the one-





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ness of human life, the essential unity underlying all surface differences.

“For this the heroes and lovers of all ages have laid down their lives; and nations like tigers have fought, knowing well that this life was a mere empty blob without freedom. Where this makes itself known in a people or even in the soul of a single man or woman, there Democracy begins to exist.” If freedom is not the ultimate issue, then all the struggles and bloodshed of the ages have been in vain.

The same thing is true of the individual, whose inner life has always been the arena of struggle in some form. The child passes into the strange inner ferment of the adolescent period; the youth enters upon the storm and stress experiences of young manhood or womanhood; but while he may not understand the inner strife and suffering, while he may regard himself as the



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helpless victim of a blind, pitiless Fate, while he may prolong the struggle unduly by seeking relief in delusive paths, still he never begins to live a truly wise and happy life until he perceives the truth, and attains that unity of the Self that transcends all inner antagonisms. It is not exceptional but the real norm of human experience, that all "world wayfare and warfare" should lead on at length to the arrival within of a new quality of consciousness, profounder, broader, potential with invulnerable peace, insuperable joy and unconquerable freedom.

But what is the real freedom that man is forever seeking, and where lies its kingdom? It is not, primarily, in free political institutions, not in free schools or free churches, or a free land, or in anything external. The true kingdom of liberty is first an *inward* kingdom, though like every other in-



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ward, vital thing, it tends to express itself in outward structure and organization. To be free, is not to escape outward limitations, but rather to *find oneself*, and so achieve freedom within. Freedom is a spiritual, personal experience; it is the unfolding of the deeper consciousness, so that as the more inward Self emerges it perceives itself as the higher necessity whose "service is perfect freedom." It is the latent union of the One with the All-life, awaking to consciousness and becoming active, dynamic, the master of life. A people is not truly free, because they live under free institutions, but only to the degree that they have achieved this inner, personal freedom for themselves.

The problem of human freedom is as old as the thinking of man. The tremendous moral consequences involved have made it one of the most debated controversies in philosophy. In differ-



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ent terms the problem is stated and restated from generation to generation, and it has almost seemed as if it were incapable of solution by the human reason. The argument of the Determinist seems unanswerable, and yet, in spite of logic, the spirit in man continues to reaffirm its freedom. May it not be that there is a confusion in the meaning of the terms, a contradiction at the very heart of the problem? May it not be that there is an illusion in our common way of thinking of things, and that this illusion once removed, this and other problems will be solved and disappear?

The modern statement of the doctrine of Determinism is that man's volition is the inevitable expression of his character reacting upon circumstances. We can ask no more, as the foundation of a doctrine of Freedom, if we understand aright what is meant by character and by circumstances. First: Char-





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acter is but another name for the man himself. It is the Self regarded as continuous and dynamic; hence it is always changing, i. e., the Self is gradually emerging into clearer consciousness and is constantly finding a fuller, freer expression. Character or the Self is not a set of fixed dispositions; it is the man as possessing certain dispositions or tendencies, not dispositions or tendencies as making the man. Character is always in the making; or in other words, the Self is always growing clearer and more distinct in consciousness. This making, or growth, is the ceaseless movement of that ever enlarging experience which we have already considered; and the inner force of this ceaseless movement is that activity which we term Will. Self-direction is the essential quality of this activity.

Secondly: What do we mean by circumstances? We are apt to think of



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man in relation to circumstances as though he were a billiard ball, driven against certain obstacles—a cushion or another ball—deflected in accordance with certain mathematical laws, and so reaching another position. But such a way of thinking ignores the fact that all circumstances affect a man through the medium of his own consciousness, i. e., the man himself from within always gives the form to each experience that comes from without. What circumstances are to me, depends upon myself. I make them to be what they are to me; and what I make them, depends upon how far I have come in my inner unfolding, how large and complete a Self I am at that particular moment.

It is at just this point that our modern philosopher, Henri Bergson, has rendered such signal service. Bergson has pointed out that the reason why all previous arguments propounded to



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demonstrate the Freedom of the Will have failed, is because the problem has been so stated as to refer only to the superficial, externalized aspects of the self-life—the life as it is expressed in discrete and separate words and deeds. Freedom has been sought in this superficial life, our usual commonplace life, the life which, perhaps for most of us, is the only one of which we are aware; and freedom has not been demonstrated here, for the simple reason that it is not here; since it is in the very nature of this surface life at the circumference of the self that it is split up into fragmentary elements which are determined by the world-environment at every point. It is only at times that free action is called for. Our ordinary life is made up of actions that are largely automatic, of habits and conventions that form a crust around our free expression. Determinism, of necessity, be-



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longs clearly to the surface plane of self-consciousness. Freedom belongs to the centre, not to the circumference. It is only at moments of crisis, or when we are touched with deep emotion, or stirred by passion that we seem to burst through this crust of habit and convention, and our whole Self decides our actions. Hence freedom lies where the personal life moves and expresses itself as a whole. "Freewill is the very nature of our lives as individual wholes, the expression of the individuality of life."

Bergson shows that the deeper we descend into the profundities of our personal being, the less are we able to express what we find there as a sequence of separate and successive ideas, feelings, efforts and states of consciousness generally; the more do we experience the Self-life as one whole, indivisible thing, like a flowing tide in which the





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successive waves run into each other and lose all distinction in one interpenetrated whole. In these depths "we have no series of moments, but prolonged and interpenetrating phases; their sequence is not a substitution of one point for another, but rather resembles a musical resolution of harmony into harmony."

Causality is a scientific conception, and science is an intellectual view. Physical science is the order that the intellect imposes on the flowing life-stream. The intellect finds resemblances, binds like to like, organizes experiences into systems in which recognized antecedents have recognized consequences, and so makes prediction possible. And science extends this view to the living world and to the conscious world of thought and will. But life itself as we know it in intuition, Bergson points out, is not like this intellec-



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tual view of it; it is a constant becoming in which there is no repetition; in which, therefore, prediction is impossible, for it is a continual new creation. Freewill is only possible, therefore, if the mere intellectual view is not absolute. Consequently, to prove that the will is free is to prove that we have a spiritual as distinct from a material nature, that we are not merely mechanical arrangements of parts in a block universe, but living upholders of a universe that is open to our creative activity, differentiations of the primal life-force which is God.

In just the measure, then, that we enter into the consciousness of the Self as one with the Creative Life of the universe, in just that degree are we free. To quote Bergson's own words: "We are free when our acts proceed from our entire personality, when they express it, when they exhibit that indefinable



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resemblance to it which we find occasionally between the true artist and his work."

The illustration of the artist will repay a further enlargement. An artist lives his more superficial life, like the rest of men, where actions are chiefly automatic or conventional; his freedom does not lie here. It may be that in a great deal of his work he expresses no freedom; he may imitate some master, or follow the ideals of some school, or commercialize his art to earn a living, or subserve the fashion and taste of the times. Obviously, there is no freedom here. But meantime something is growing up within him; it is a profound inward movement of which no one else is aware; it marks the expansion of his soul, the development of his individuality. At first it may be vague and undefined, but with the passage of time, it gathers strength. Out of all the



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manifold experiences of his life something enters into and becomes a part of this growing spiritual selfhood. It becomes more urgent and pressing. It rises like a tide. He begins to experiment; and his experiments are failures, yet they all count. The something within keeps coming on. His whole being is gathered into it. He knows that it is the deepest reality of himself, struggling to burst all bonds and express itself fully, freely. At last the hour is ripe; at last he can express himself, transcending triumphantly his materials; he, the artist, creates a new thing.

This, in Bergson's view, is his free act. Such self-growth, self-incarnations, self-announcements are the only free acts. "Freewill is creative action." Freedom belongs to the inner spiritual life. It is our ever-present potential as spiritual beings, but only rarely do we





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actualize it. "That our spiritual life is genuine action, capable of independence, initiation and irreducible novelty, not mere result produced from outside; that it is so much ours as to constitute every moment, for him who can see, an essentially incomparable and new invention, is exactly what represents for us the name of liberty. Understood thus, liberty is a profound thing; we seek it only in those moments of high and solemn choice which come into our life, not in the petty familiar actions which their very insignificance submits to all surrounding influences, to every wandering breeze. Liberty is rare; many live and die who have never known it. Liberty is a thing which contains an infinite number of degrees and shades; it is measured by our capacity for the inner life."

This is only another way of saying that freedom is the perfected con-



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sciousness, the higher spiritual or cosmic consciousness, the inward sense of oneness with the whole spiritual organism of humanity, which is (potentially) present in and to each individual; it is the unity of the Self, awakened and realized at the deeper centre of life.

It is the author of John's Gospel who says "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." To him the terms "Son," "the Christ," "the Logos," "the light," etc., all stand for the same thing, viz.: the divine, or God-consciousness, which he saw most fully realized in Jesus of Nazareth, but which he also believed was potential in every individual. So that it is as if he said "If your true divine Self—the God-in-you—is awakened and recognized in consciousness, then are ye free indeed; for freedom is known alone from that deep centre."

So with that other profound state-



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ment, "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." There is a sense in which the perception of any truth whatsoever, enlarges the boundaries of our freedom; but "the Truth," in this connection has a more specific meaning. "The Truth that makes us free" is the truth about ourselves, perceived and realized, of our true Selves in union with the All-life.

Closely associated with this conception of freedom is the necessity for withdrawal, disentanglement, abandonment, letting go, dying to self. Self-withdrawal is a rather negative expression for the deepening consciousness; the descent of the self from the circumference of intense individuality and the surface of separation, into the underlying unities of the true and deeper Self, is the positive statement; but the movement is the same. It consists in "ever leaving go of the surfaces of objects,



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and so taking the heart of them with us"; it is the surrender of the appearances for the sake of grasping the realities. Our ordinary life bears witness to this as the one practical method of real possession. To enter into possession of anything is to become gradually independent of it. We only truly possess that which we do not want; so long as we cannot do without a thing we do not possess it; it possesses us. Therefore, to possess one Self is to possess all things, for it is to be independent of all things.

We may test this principle in everyday experiences, and no exercise is more helpful in bringing the true Self into consciousness. Take the body, for example. Think of all the despotic tyrannies exercised by our bodies over ourselves. How can the Self be freed from these bodily tyrannies? Remember your relation to your body. It is not you,





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but rather your instrument for self-expression. You do not need to be its victim, for you can become its master. Remember, also, that when you walk away from it and leave it behind, as it were, it will have to follow you, for it could have no existence apart from you; and in following you it will grow more obedient to your will, more harmonious to your thoughts, more responsive to your desires. So, quite deliberately and decisively, again and again during the day, leave your body a little behind, let it drop out of your thought completely. Forget for a while all about its imperious demands, its passions and appetites, its hungers and thirsts, its aches and pains, its fatigue and weariness, its funny little needs and vanities. And as *you* thus go on ahead, paying no attention to the body whatever, it will learn the lesson and catch up to you again, recognizing in *you* the true and domi-



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nant master. It may be hard at first, because we have let our bodies rule us for so long; but by persistent practice we can attain to a new and joy-giving sense of freedom, and become the masters of our bodies, rather than the slaves.

Similarly with our intellectual life. How many and varied are the tyrannies exercised over us by our intellects! No man knows less about real freedom than the man who lives his life merely on the intellectual plane, for, as Bergson says, "there is a deeper than intellect in man." Therefore, quite decisively and intentionally, day by day, leave your intellect for a time in silence and abeyance; forget all about its tyrannous thoughts and demands, its prejudices and superstitions, its funny little fears and fancies—the long legacy of ages of animal evolution. Leave them all behind and, slipping away from the only



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guide to truth that you perhaps have ever known as yet, dare to go your own way into the Unseen, alone; feeling for the path by intuition, till some day your intellect may follow you through the darkness and catch up with you in that clearer light to which your intuition has led you. Determine never to be bound absolutely by any of the conclusions of your intellect, or fossilized by any pattern it may invent; for thus to bow down slavishly before your intellect is to abdicate the true kingdom of your Self, and to miss forever the divine leadership of "the deeper than intellect that is in man!"

So with all external things—money, clothes, comforts, luxuries—harmless though they be in themselves; so with all objects of desire—ambitions, fame, applause, success—sweet, good and beautiful as they may be—we must be free of them all, even of persons whom



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we love; for even love must be possessed by the Self as master.

The aim of such a practice is not that we may become free *from* all these things or persons, and never have anything to do with them again; that would be asceticism, one of the most dreary and useless tyrannies that man has ever known; but rather that we may be free *of* them, that they may not get in our way or impede our progress—as the master-worker is free of his tools—and so really possess them all for both use and enjoyment.

This habit of withdrawal and detachment from the things of life is the practical side of the deepening of the life-center, and proceeds along with it. It is the old paradox of losing life that we may find it; losing the shallow, feverish life at the surface that we may find the deeper, richer life within; losing the divided, superficial and separate self at





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the circumference that we may find the true Self at the center in union with All. That which we let go and leave behind is not lost, but found again in a new and more satisfying discovery. It is as if a man sat on a spur of the foothills, enjoying the scene spread out before him; the horizon may be narrow, but the landscape, dotted with stream and meadow and woods, is lovely and intimate and so captivating in its beauty that he feels well content to remain where he is and cannot imagine any scene more desirable. Then comes the strange mystical desire—so natural to human hearts—to climb higher. So he rises, turns his back reluctantly on the dear, familiar scene, and begins the ascent. He lets the scene go, and literally it drops away from him as he climbs; in a few moments it is lost to sight and sound. But when the new resting-place on the heights is once at-



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tained he finds, to his delight, that all he seemed to lose is given back to him, and in grander perspective, mightier setting, and more sublime beauty.

So it is with that process commonly spoken of as Death to self. The self to which we are to die is the narrow, delusive self, the self of which we are aware in opposition to the not-self, the self which is constantly coming into friction or antagonism with others and becoming entangled with the things of the external world; this is the self we are to sacrifice and renounce, simply because it stands in the way of the true Self, the whole Self. The true Self is not other than the superficial, delusive self, as if to gain the first were to lose, in the absolute sense, the second. All that we lose in awaking to the true Self is the delusiveness and the perpetual slavery to outward circumstances that characterize the surface self. The view



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from the higher point includes all the views from the lower points. The happiness of the true Self includes, not excludes, all the other delights. True freedom embraces the lower kingdoms. The attainment of that true freedom of the Spirit in man gives him, for the first time, the real possession of his body, the true mastery of his intellect, the actual realization of his true divine Self.

Meantime, our attitude should be neither that of indifference nor yet of anxiety, but rather one of self-poise and readiness for whatever may come. Life is full of manifold experiences and, as we have seen, the value of experience lies not in what it brings but in what it elicits in the Spirit. We may be sure that all the experience that is necessary for the full blossoming of the Spirit in us will arrive in due time, but we cannot determine either the order or the



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time of any particular experience; we must be ready for each when it arrives; and to the prepared, self-possessed man, every experience mediates good. There is, therefore, no need to hurry; all we require is faith—i. e., patience combined with sure expectation that “all is provided for,” and that all is well. Haste and exhaustion belong to the surface life, not to the depths within. “The higher the velocity, the deeper the weariness; but the tempo of the real life is always leisurely. The soul must come to the Whole at length, and the Whole into the soul.”

Besides, life in each moment is good to the man of simple needs and inner poise; it is all full of promise, since the larger life is always near at hand and will enter into consciousness by unexpected ways at the slightest opportunity.





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"Is your present experience hard to bear?

Yet remember that never again in all your days will you have another chance of the same.

Do not fly the lesson but have a care that you master it while you have the opportunity."

The pathway to freedom, then, is one that leads inwards toward the deeper regions of the true Self-life. On the outer side, it involves withdrawal from the circumference fretting and friction, the indifference to surface circumstances, the disentanglement from desires and things; and yet it results not in the leaving behind of anything, for all things follow the truly free Spirit. On the inner side, the end of the pathway is union with one's Self, inward harmony, the effective realization of the wholeness of one's personality and the "living, moving and having one's being in Him." To attain to such freedom, through the pathway of the inner life,



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is to live the life of the true Son or Daughter of God.

To realize this freedom in yourself is the great end for which the Universe has rolled hitherto. For this end, your life, possibly yet many lives, are lived; for this, death, many deaths may be necessary. Toward this, all your experiences—desires, fears, struggles, failures, disappointments, successes, joys, sorrows, bewilderments, sufferings, regrets, hopes—must one day lead. To thus be free, one must be positive, not negative; active, not quiescent; optimist, not pessimist. The free man does not seek a deliverance out of life, but rather a fuller deliverance into it; he does not disentangle himself from objects of desire in order that he may escape them, rather that he may use and enjoy them with dignity and mastery. He seeks only to be free from the wheel of life, that he may become the



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charioteer in the car; and would bring his world-thirsts to an end, only in having found the inward fountain of living waters, "whereof, if a man drink, he shall not thirst again."

"Him who is not detained by mortal adhesions, who walks in this world yet not of it,

Taking part in everything with equal mind, with free limbs and senses unentangled—

Giving all, accepting all, using all, enjoying all, asking nothing, shocked at nothing—

Whom love follows everywhere, but he follows not it,—

Him all creatures worship, all men and women bless."



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"Where bides Brotherhood,  
Where, but within?

So never shall charity avail me,  
And never kind words nor the urging of excellent  
laws,

Nor warring for weighty politics, nor voting with the  
oppressed—

Only the going to Self, is a going to my brother—  
Only walking deep in to the heart of love is walking  
Out to the darkened cities of men."

*James Oppenheim.*



THE spirit of this modern age  
is preëminently the spirit of  
Democracy; but that may  
mean much or little, accord-  
ing to the content we put into the great  
word. It is a name to conjure with  
to-day, and yet to few is it given to dis-





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cern clearly the great reality that the familiar word signifies. To the vast majority, Democracy is conceived of as something external, whereas the truth is that it has its source and actual abode in the inner life of men.

As an outward manifestation, it may be expressed as a theory of Government, which declares that the real sovereignty is vested in the People (spelled with a capital P), rather than in any emperor, king or potentate. Or it may be conceived of as a definite form of political organization, a particular kind of government, in which the people possess the right to elect their own representatives in city, state, or nation. Or yet again, it may be regarded as a method of social expediency, a sop thrown to the restless and discontented "masses" whereby they are led to imagine that they possess more power in the affairs of government than they



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actually do possess, and thus the more turbulent spirits among them are held in check—for a time. Or, finally, it may be employed as a mechanical balloting contrivance for “equating the hoof and claw of warring interests.” As such, it deserves to take its place speedily in the museums of antiquities along with the devices for the solution of all other impossible mechanical problems.

Let us confess it frankly, if Democracy contains what the politicians have said it contains and nothing more, it would be an entirely hopeless enterprise—the climax of unreason, the consummate delusion of history. It would be vastly better to be a peasant and have a king or a lord to reverence, than to be a mere politician and reverence nothing.

While it is true that some form of outward organization is obviously im-



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plied in the word Democracy, its actual and vital meaning is contained in the Idea which ever tends to take form, in the Spirit which always creates its own body. So that the comparative failure—or shall we say—the limited success of Democracy in the world thus far, considered as an outward form of government, is due not to the Idea or the Spirit, but rather to the primary emphasis having been placed upon external manifestations rather than upon their inner sources.

There are three prophets in this modern age who stand forth, preëminently, as having been habitually and instinctively aware that Democracy is neither a form of government nor a social expediency, but a realized experience of the inner mind and heart of man: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Maurice Maeterlinck. These are the great “poets and prophets of Democ-



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racy," but in what sense? To these it has been given as, perhaps, to none others, to possess the invincible sense of the democracy of all life and its manifold experiences, to see that all the experiences of all men are equally penetrated by the genuine and the infinite energies of nature, to discern the divine as everywhere present, to realize the unfathomable and equable character of our immediate, ordinary and so-called insignificant experiences, to glorify the commonplace, to regard as sacred and as possessing absolute and intrinsic value all persons and everything that is.

As we have already seen, Reality, or the Larger Self, or God, is the most inward and true Self of each individual, toward the fuller consciousness of which all the varied experiences of Life steadily lead. The individual becomes conscious of his identity with this Larger





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Self by a process of inward withdrawal from the surface-planes of mere, ordinary self-consciousness. "Here in this perennial, immeasurable consciousness sleeping within us, we come again to our celestial city, (in which all others dwell as equals and lovers) our Home from which as individuals we proceed, but from which we are never really separated. And when we touch this inner depth, learning in experience who we really are, our true identity, we realize for the first time in our life the meaning of Joy and Rest and Deliverance."

The Way of Life, however, never ends with this consciousness of individual blessedness; if it did, there would never be any democracy. What was said of Jesus, is literally true of all those who attain to union with the Universal Self:—they "count it not a thing to be grasped at, to be equal (or one)



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with God," but humble themselves, taking upon themselves the form of servants. This is inevitable, for to be identified with the Larger Self is to become one with the Creative Life which is ever proceeding forth from itself to find a more perfect form of realization. To become one with the Universal Life, in whatsoever degree, is to become part of the creative effort and redemptive passion which unceasingly and everywhere operate in the world.

True Democracy, then, begins in the awakening of the inner consciousness to the sense of the oneness of the Self with the Whole, but it cannot remain passive. It is something tremendously urgent in the heart of the individual and of society. It is the ever-ascending life. It is a living power which forms, grows, expands within, and ever and anon bursts forth and breaks through, bringing disorganization and destruc-



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tion to existing forms that it may create the higher form. It is a perpetual Will to incarnate the new humanity.

From the viewpoint of humanity as a whole, Democracy may be regarded as the World-spirit which, in the eternal process of self-utterance and self-realization, is ever expanding like a Tree of Life into human races (branches) and human individuals (leaves). According to Carpenter it is "a body within the body." The figure is that of the perfect insect being preformed within the larva. Underneath the larval covering, the normal life of the larva is proceeding, the form of the perfect insect, dimly appearing; so that the body of the insect seems to lie slumbering there, enfolded in a thin, half-transparent birth-shroud. In due time this protective sac bursts and falls away, and the insect is liberated, unfolds its wings



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and rises into the life for which it has been prepared.

From all that science has revealed there is little doubt that the human order issued from the sub-human in some such fashion as this. The human order arose out of the sub-human by a process inconceivably slow and inappreciably gradual. While the animal kingdom went on its usual way, the new kingdom was forming within it, a "body within the body." "Nothing but the patience of an infinite God could have watched with joy the first faint beginnings of human things—the dawn of Reason, flicker after flicker, with long intervals; the first faint pulses of what was to become Conscience, so faint, so easily quenched, but always returning, strangely reinforced; the breaking light of self-consciousness emerging out of a group consciousness; the seemingly interminable stretches of half-light, the





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age-long twilight of the coming race; not to be hurried, for the ascending life must have a fitting organism through which to express itself, and the requisite physical and psychical changes could only be accomplished by infinitesimal steps."

The clear suggestion is of an imago (humanity as we know it) forming itself within and ultimately issuing from, the larval covering (the sub-human kingdom). But something of this same kind is taking place within the structure of modern society. We need not blind our eyes to the evils of society to-day. It is like a ghastly panorama, passing before the eye of the Spirit. It is full of disease, weariness and suffering; the cancer of greed and selfishness has its roots entwined in the vitals; death and destruction roam to and fro everywhere. We cannot deny these things, nor do we try to explain them away;



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but still, we dare to affirm that they are, after all, the larval, surface things; they do not reveal the hidden depths where the true Democracy is forming.

All the "good work" that has been done through the ages by individuals and groups, finds here its true significance. All the saints, heroes, martyrs, reformers, prophets, saviours, lovers, nurses, quiet, kindly folk, and all ministering spirits; all the religious organizations, of whatsoever name, the philanthropic societies, scientific movements, legislative enactments, hospitals, reformatories, care of infants, protection of children, old-age pensions, etc., etc.—all these activities are not fragmentary and unrelated spasms of love, dependent entirely upon the enthusiasm of the individual heart; they are simply the more obviously protruding points of the more perfect society that is being preformed within the less perfect; and



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the greater part of that inner body—the true Democracy—is invisible, deeply lying, subtly pervasive, ready to appear at unexpected places, and slowly being strengthened and fashioned from within. Just as surely as the imago must at last ascend out of the shattered and discarded cerements of the larva, so the inward spiritual kingdom—the true humanity—must liberate itself and triumph gloriously over the world-kingsdoms, whatsoever they may be.

The final emergence of the true Democracy will not be without a struggle, for the crust is thick and we must not underrate the obstacles. Organized society is full of self-deceit, smooth-faced respectability, smug self-complacency, cowardice, infidelity, soul-stifling mechanism, rule-of-thumb morality, formal religion, mutual distrust, alienation from nature, greed, selfishness, envy, slavery, conventionalism, the puppet-



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dance of gentility, condescension, patronizing charity—all this and much more that might be named is apparently enough to stifle, choke and strangle any pulse of spiritual idealistic life; and it is not strange that so many hearts of men and women are exhausted, prostrated, bruised and broken beneath it; but the spirit of Democracy is present underneath it all, touching all, forgetting none, understanding everything, despising nobody, accepting all, waiting its own time for full deliverance.

“Mighty long-delaying vagrant stream! Of innumerable growing, rustling lives! Out of some cavern mouth long ago where the cave-dwellers sat gnawing burnt bones, down to to-day—with ever-growing tumult, and glints of light upon thee in the distance as of half-open eyes, and the sound of countless voices out of thee, nearer, nearer,





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past promontory after promontory winding, widening, hastening!"

But the ultimate issue is predetermined—even now it is finding a broader, fuller expression than ever before—and with its coming shall emerge faithfulness, self-reliance, self-help, passionate comradeship and freedom. As the individual self learns how to withdraw into the deeper regions of consciousness where it no longer surveys the constructed order from without, but enters within the life-stream that laves all shores, it becomes aware of itself as Democracy; and like a Divine Artist, entering into all experience, it feels its identity with each, and the experience of each as its very own.

"If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in the village is my equal, and were not proud to



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have him walk with me as my friend, I would not write another word."

It matters not who it may be—the young woman at the lunch counter, or the policeman at the corner, the railway conductor, or the bright, sunny child with blossoming lips and eyes; it matters not what the experience may be—winter or summer, day or night, youthful or aged, average or exceptional, good or bad, wild or regular, primitive or civilized, pagan or christian; the one in whom Democracy has awakened, unifies and embraces it all within himself; it is his own; he seems to spread himself as the common soul beneath it all; he arises into a new significance through it all.

This, then, is the true Democracy; a body within a body, the slowly ascending love-kingdom, the ultimate truth of Society; not waiting our arrival at the end of a long history of social experi-



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ment and reform, but itself determining from within each revolution, each rearrangement of parts, each readjustment of function. From outside we appear to be forever seeking, through antagonisms and failures, to discover the perfect political and social organization. From within, which is the truth-side, the perfect humanity is seeking to express itself amid all the intractableness of human minds and wills. The coming Democracy is the true coming of the Son of Man in the life of humanity; and the time of its coming is only conditioned by the awakening to consciousness in the individual of that true Self which *is* Democracy, the one Son of Man in all men.

The creed of the religion of Democracy is both simple and profound: "The Kingdom of God is within you," which affirms the Divine indwelling in every life. The churches of Christendom have



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not been wrong in professing their belief in the Doctrine of the Incarnation; they have erred only in limiting the incarnation to one historic character. They have accepted the birth of the child, but they have never yet accepted in its fullness the message of the man. For if Jesus taught anything it was that God is incarnate in every individual life. The truth of the incarnation is as broad and universal as humanity. What we see in Jesus in clearness, we come to see in some measure in every man, woman and child, when the Self in us perceives its identity with the Son of Man in every life. So, we are right in calling Jesus divine; we are only wrong when we fail to see the essential divineness of all humanity, when we fail to discern that the divineness that shines forth so gloriously in him is, nevertheless, potential in every human life the whole world round.





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It is upon this truth that Democracy bases its firm conviction of the absolute value of persons, simply as such. If this is not true there is no value at all in the world. Personality, if it possesses worth, must possess it intrinsically. If the individual has no value, humanity has none. It is impossible for principles (honor, truth, justice, etc.) to have an absolute value apart from the absolute value of the spiritual person, for principles or ideals do not exist except in relation to beings whose principles they are.

It is the Spirit in man that gives worth to Science. When we are told that an impersonal and disinterested desire for truth, and openness to facts are the first conditions for scientific research, we are only being told that man never can arrive at truth unless he is open to the impact of reality. The emphasis is laid upon an attitude, without



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which man cannot find the truth; but that truth is never found in mere individuality, but in the Self as a social being, as a member of a universal society, having what is disinterested and universal as its center.

It is the Self also that gives value to philosophy. To analyze knowledge, to investigate the laws of mind and to discover the meaning of the world, is valueless unless meanings are relative to what is living, permanent and eternal, that is, to Selves. Thought is the law of our true life. The vision of the object is also the self-realization of the subject. The deepening of our knowledge of the world is also the enrichment of the Self.

It is the same with Art, for all forms of art are but Self-expressions. The sense of beauty evoked by an object is not in the object, but in the Self that perceives. The sense of harmony is not



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in the music, but in the Self that hears. The sense of sublimity is not in the mountain, but in the Self that gazes in awe-filled silence.

These considerations force us to realize the absolute value of the individual, because it is living persons that alone give value to the world; and that which gives worth to the world must possess in itself an ultimate value. The fact is that our present social system very largely denies the worth of the individual soul; and it denies this no less in its assertion of selfish individualism, than in the creation of its slaves and dependents. The War of the Nations, in which everything has been staked on the absolute value of so-called principles, has revealed how blind is even this modern age to the absolute value of persons.

What we fail to realize is that if we pass by even the least considerable man,



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woman or child, we are passing by all the humanities and the divinities and setting our hearts not on the universal, but rather on the limited, the partial, the transient. There is a wide ocean of difference between taking in the last man and leaving him out. It is not a question of one man, but of humanity. The reason Jesus laid such stress on "the least of these," and on the one sheep that had wandered away from the fold while the ninety and nine reposed in safety, or on his mission to the sick rather than to those who need no physician, was not because he was alone interested in the poor and halt and maimed and blind of humanity, but because he saw that men everywhere, even good men, were constantly inclined to forget the absolute value of "these least," and their vital and integral relationship to the Whole. Never forget, if you leave anybody out, you must





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leave your own Self out, and must live henceforth by the standards of the hired butler who stands at the door with instructions as to whom to admit and whom to refuse admittance. This is why exclusiveness in any form is such a fearful and deadly thing—not because it shuts others out from you, but because it shuts you out from the life of the Whole.

The supreme emphasis, however, must be placed continually on the priority of the inwardness of Democracy. All proceeds from within. All social watchwords, are, first of all, spiritual facts; and nothing can ever become organized in society, which was not first in the heart. Structure follows desire as desire follows vision. Revelation precedes reformation. The seer comes before the doer. The practical man, whom we have made our idol in this modern age, would be impotent were it



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not for the dreamer. The philosopher rationalizes the intuition of the prophet; the scientist formulates the imagination of the poet; the reformer institutionalizes the vision of the mystic. We forget, therefore, that the man who generates and spreads abroad from his own vital center, sincere, true, profound brotherly feeling, has a more important place in building up the social fabric than the man who endows a college or establishes an institution.

The great ideals embodied in the words Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, derive whatever power they possess as social watchwords and all their significance for social organizations, from the fact that they are already, in some measure, realities in the heart. The reason why it is not possible suddenly to make all men free by some forcible altering of external relations in society, is because freedom is not an endowment to



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be bestowed upon men from without. All men would not be free if they had the chance. Freedom is an inner attainment, something to be won, disentangled, realized in the heart first; indeed, inward attainment and outward arrangement are but two aspects of the same process.

All men are not equals simply because they live in a country whose Constitution contains the sublime declaration that all men are born free and equal. The equality of all men is only experienced by those who have learned to see with the eye of the inner Self, and so are able to discern, beneath the accidentals and incidentals of human life, the true essentials of the Son of Man who dwells in every life.

All men are not brothers simply because they belong to some Church or have joined some Fraternal order, or are accustomed to applaud sentiments



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of human brotherhood, whenever expressed. Brotherhood, like freedom and equality, is a thing of the inner life; it must not only be a belief, but an experience; it must be known and felt and loved, as the life of our lives.

Just as it is true that most men are better than their creed, and on this we build our hope of higher and truer expressions of faith; so also the hearts of most men are broader than the artificial limitations, deeper than the conventional standards of the social organization wherein they live, and this is the ground of our expectation of a truer, more human society. Many a man continues to live in the prison-house of public opinion, in whose heart throb the pulses of personal liberty which make him inwardly a defier and scorner of the powers-that-be. Many a man conforms daily to the conventions and codes of his class, whose heart is big enough to





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receive and embrace all men in equality and brotherhood. All such men and women are the potential saviours and redeemers of the world. If the world could become outwardly that which their hearts are inwardly, the agony of the ages would be accomplished, the perfect society would be here.

But the Will hesitates; the bonds are many; the fetters are heavy, tradition and habit are well-nigh all-powerful, the Inward Reality is glimpsed, but it is seen from afar. All such await the arrival of the great Individual, who will summon their slack and fragmentary powers, unify their forces, make their potential energy kinetic, fashion them into an organism, deliver them to themselves, express in terms of erect, challenging independent manhood, that which is embryonic in them.

As Walt Whitman, the "poet of Democracy," cried:



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"Underneath all, individuals."

Produce great men, real leaders, he said, and the rest follows. Whenever the great leader appears, he stands as a veritable Christ to his age. "He comes as Siegfried to cut the restraining links of the heavy overlaying armour, to awaken the sleeping Brunhilde with a kiss, to set her free into the true divine knowledge and power of Love, and from that love-union to create the new race which at once destroys and fulfills the old."

True Democracy implies infinity. Men are declared to be equal because it is discovered that all men, the least as well as the greatest, have the same access to the Infinite. The obvious disparities become insignificant in view of this fundamental commonness. Infinity plus a million is seen to be no more than infinity plus one. If it were not



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for religion, democracy would be inconceivable; if a man's Self is measurable and transient, democracy is ridiculous.

But how shall we conceive Religion? Certainly not as something to be identified with ecclesiastical organizations, or with the theologies or sacraments or rituals of any church. All these may serve as the expressions of religion, but they do not contain all religion; and all our definitions are far too inadequate to express a tithe of the greatness and universality of that Life which is Religion. In its broadest sense, Religion is the bond linking the individual with the universal, the temporal with the eternal, the actual with the ideal, the human with the divine, the practical activity with the underlying spiritual purpose. Religion is the Great Unifier, the common denominator of all effort and aspiration; it is faith in the invisible, both of the universe and of human



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lives; it is belief in the Infinite always manifesting itself in the finite, and in the finite as everywhere enshrining something of the Infinite; it is belief in the larger life that oceans mortality; belief in the Transcendence of That whose Immanence is the secret of every created thing; it is the unfailing and frank witness to the permanent, whose manifold forms change, but itself abides; it is communion in prayer, praise, meditation, silence and all self-losing with the Unseen; and all this issuing in reverence, humility, patience, daring, hopefulness, self-reliance, joy, love. Toward such a religion, born in the depths of the inner life, and deepened and broadened by all the manifold experiences of the years, the unfolding consciousness in man must surely lead the faltering steps of humanity.

In his powerful and prophetic story, "In the Days of the Comet," Mr. Wells





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tells of a *great change* that comes over the world, following an atmospheric phenomenon in which a "green vapor" is generated in the clouds and falls upon the earth with instantaneous effect. As this peculiar vapor descends it has the effect of putting every one to sleep; this sleep continues for three days, and when the people finally awake, their interior nature has undergone a complete change.

Where before they "saw dimly," they now see clearly; all petty differences and quarrels are perceived in their true perspective. Instead of place and power and influence and wealth being the all-important goals of ambition, as before the change, every one now strives to be of service to the world. Love and kindness become greater factors than commercial expediency or business success. Human brotherhood is realized



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at last. The perfected society has come to its own in the world.

In many respects, Wells's account of the great change and its effect upon people corresponds with the effect of the dawning of the spiritual consciousness upon mankind, as we have sought to describe it in the foregoing chapters. Both religion and science point to a time when this earth will know freedom from strife and misery. Even the elements which have hitherto been regarded as beyond the boundaries of man's will, we see now, not may be, but *will* be completely controlled. All the forces and factors that make for social control are now seen to be in the hands of man himself. Every change, every improvement, every advance in the life of humanity awaits only the coming of the larger man, i. e., the man of the deeper, broader consciousness, who has



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found his Self in union with the  
*Whole*.

Many of those who realize the signs of the times, are looking for the birth of cosmic-consciousness as a race-consciousness, foreshadowing the new day. The "second coming of Christ," for which the ages have yearned, is it not the coming of that new humanity in which the Son of Man shall be enthroned in every heart? Democracy, as we have conceived it, was articulated, personalized in the Christ who dwelt in Jesus of Nazareth. That Christ has ever been and must ever be, *par excellence*, the master, the saviour, in whatever earthly life he abides. Democracy is the content of his heart, the quality of his spirit, the power of his love. He is ever "the kingdom that is within you."

So we are not looking to-day for the birth of *a* Christ-child, but of *the* Christ-child in individual hearts and



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lives; we are not waiting for the second coming of *a* man who shall be as Jesus was, but we are confidently expecting the coming of *the* man (humanity) who shall be cosmically conscious as was Jesus of Nazareth, and all the others down the ages who have discovered his Way of Life.

“It is by love only that we can fully enter into that harmony with others which alone constitutes our own reality and the reality of the universe. We conceive the universe as a spiritual whole, made up of individuals, who have no existence except as manifestations of the Whole; as the Whole, on the other hand, has no existence except as manifested in them.”

“God loves from whole to parts; but human soul  
Must rise from individual to the whole.  
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;  
The center moved, a circle straight succeeds,  
Another still, and still another spreads;—





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Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace;  
His country next, and next all human race;  
Wide, and more wide, the o'er flowings of the mind  
Take every creature in, of every kind;  
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
And Heaven beholds its image in man's breast."

*Pope's "Essay on Man."*

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